GODS WHO DANCE

BY

TED SHAWN

Rose Lischner

GODS WHO DANCE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/bwb_W9-BTJ-415

Ted Shawn as the Hindu God Siva called
"Nataraja—Lord of the Dance"

GODS WHO DANCE

BY

TED SHAWN

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK *E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc.* PUBLISHERS

GODS WHO DANCE, COPYRIGHT, 1929, BY
E. P. DUTTON & CO., INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED :: PRINTED IN U.S.A.

First Edition

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
	Preface	xi
I.	Gods Who Dance	3
II.	Popular and Theatrical Dancing in Japan	18
III.	Sacred, Classic and Court Dances of Japan	37
IV.	Dancing in China	46
V.	Dancing in the Malay Peninsula	58
VI.	Dancers of Burma	69
VII.	Nautch Dancers of Old India	84
VIII.	Dances of Aborigines in India	101
IX.	Demon Dances of Tibet	113
X.	Hindu Temple Dances	126
XI.	Rhythms of Life in Ceylon	138
XII.	Puppet Plays of Java	145
XIII.	The Royal Cambodian Ballet	156
XIV.	Dancing on the Isles of Fear	165
XV.	Dancing in North Africa	178
XVI.	Dancing in Spain	194
	Bibliography	207

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Ted Shawn as the Hindu God Siva called "Nataraja—Lord of the Dance" . . . . . Frontispiece

PAGE

A Cambodian Siva between two Hindu bronzes of Krishna 5
Siva outwits Kali in the dance contest 9
Ume-no-utsume dances on the drum 9
Ted Shawn performing his Cosmic Dance of Siva at the Siva temple Mahabalipuram, India 15
Kikugoro Onoe—a famous actor-dancer 21
"Sambaso"—a puppet dance 21
Kikugoro in "Yasuna" 21
"The Three Drunkards"—a comedy dance 27
Geisha dancers 29
Koshiro Matsumoto in private life 31
Koshiro as the Lady Sarashina 31
Ennosuke Ichikawa as Mountain God 31
Koshiro as the Demon in Momiji-Gari 31
A modernistic ballet created by Ennosuke Ichikawa . . 35
Shinto priestesses dancing the "Kagura" at Nara . . . 39
An open air performance of Bugaku at Tokio 39
Ancient masks used in the Bugaku dances 41
Scene from a Noh dance 43
Mei Lan-Fang the greatest actor-dancer of China in four of his favorite roles 49
Ruth St. Denis in a costume given her by Mei Lan-Fang 53
Ted Shawn garbed as a Chinese theatre general . . . 53
Ann Douglas—a Denishawn Dancer—in a Shanghai garden 53

PAGE

Mei Lan-Fang with Miss St. Denis and Mr. Shawn, Pavilion Theatre, Peking 53
Chinese actors in a warrior dance 55
Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn performing a Malay dance in the palace of the Sultan of Johore 59
Malay men in Singapore in a native dance 63
Dayak warriors in a dance of mimic combat 63
A Dayak war-dancer in full regalia 63
A Burmese dancer snapped on the roof of our hotel . . 71
A Burmese dancer with her "whackin' white cheroot" . 71
The Princess in a Zat Pwe 71
Po Sein in a Zat Pwe 71
The two dancers at Hadji's palace in a duet dance . . 75
Po Sein—Burma's greatest dancer 75
Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in Burmese costume on the Royal Lakes, Rangoon 75
A Yein Pwe on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon 81
A Yein Pwe at a garden party celebration 83
Malka Jan of Calcutta 89
Nautch girls of Cawnpore performing a fire dance . . 89
A typical nautch girl 91
A group of nautch girls 91
A Kashmiri nautch dancer 91
The famous Bachwa Jan 91
A nautch boy on the streets of Quetta, Baluchistan . . 95
Nautch girls dancing for Miss St. Denis and Mr. Shawn at a Tomasha in Shalimar Gardens, Lahore . . . 97
A dancing girl of Delhi and her orchestra 99
Oraons—another aboriginal tribe of India—dancing . 103
The Rajah of the Santals 103
The Santals—an aboriginal tribe of India in a village dance 105

PAGE

The Santal men dance and play the drums simultaneously 105
The Tibetan Lamas—Devil Dancer, Bhutia Monastery, Darjeeling 115
The ten foot long bronze horns 119
Ted Shawn with General Laden La and dancers . . 119
The thousand year old black hat dance 119
Dancers at the Mount Everest Hotel, Darjeeling . . . 119
A Hindu religious festival car 131
A group of deva-dassis—temple dancing girls 131
A dance performed with spikes driven through the body 131
A devil dancer of Malabar with sky-scraper headdress . 131
A temple procession with dancing girls 135
Mohurrum—the breast beating dance 135
Hindu children at a dance game 135
Kamalambal, deva-dassi of Madura temple 135
Sinhalese devil dancers before the elephant bearing the Buddha's tooth, Kandy 141
A dance performed to heal disease in Ceylon 141
Serimpi dancing before the Sultan of Djockjakarta . . 147
A dramatic moment in the wayang orang 147
A group of masked dancers of Java 147
A make-believe prince and his retinue 147
A Bejojo dancer 149
The Sultan of Djockjakarta and his queen 149
Kodrad and a pupil in a duet dance 149
A Javanese actor 149
A Javanese shadow puppet drama with gamelan orchestra 151
Dancers of the Royal Cambodian ballet 157
A dancer in male costume and a dancer in female costume 159
Dancers before the doors of the king's palace at Pnom-Penh 161
A ballet in action in the royal dance pavilion 161
Cambodian ballet on palace platform 161

PAGE

Cambodian orchestra 161
The "Surtida" danced by young society people of Manila 167
Miss Victoria Lopez and her brother in movements from the Filipino peasant dance "Carinosa" 169
A Bontoc war dance at Baguio, P.I. 173
A Kalinga group dance 173
An Igorot group dance 175
Ted Shawn and a head-hunter Kangsa player 175
A Tunisian dancer 181
Rue des Ouled Naïls, Biskra 181
An "Ouled Riche" 181
The group of dancers at Bou Saada 181
An Arab dancing girl with her lover 183
The picturesque way in which the desert dancers travel . 185
Soudanese negroes performing the "Danse Negre" . . 185
"La Danse des Ouled Naïls" 187
A beauty of Touggourt 191
Two dancers of the Ouled Naïl tribe 191
On an Arab roof-top 191
Mr. Shawn with Captain Perrier after flying over the Sahara Desert 191
Clay dolls which catch delightfully the Spirit of the Flamenco dancers of Spain . . . . 196 and 197
La Argentina—18th Century Bolero 199
Classic Spanish dance 199
Peasant dance 199
Flamenco dance 199
The genius of Sargent brings us the real atmosphere of the "Cuadro Flamenco" in his "El Jaleo" . . . 201

PREFACE

The big game hunter dreams always of some new field untouched by other hunters, where game of all kinds abounds, and the animals have not yet learned to be afraid of the gun. I am like the big game hunter, except that my hunting is in the field of human bodily movement, and my dream is to be some day with the first white explorers to reach a tribe of primitive people untouched by our white civilization and study there at first hand, their dancing. I hope it will be my privilege to visit all the native tribes of Central and South Africa and research into their dances. I think this is an immensely important field for, like the "humus" of a soil that has been untilled through centuries, there is richness to be found in the rhythmic structure of the dance of so-called savage peoples that all the dancing of the white race and those parts of the earth under the dominion of the white race have lost. The research into genuine and unspoiled primitive dancing would have a far-reaching influence on all departments of life and learning. From the standpoint of anthropology alone, nothing is so revealing or yields up so much authentic data as the observations of the dance ceremonies, rituals and festivals of these people who are still in the childhood-of-the-race stage. All the various new schools in psychology, such as Behaviorism, for instance, are going back into these remote periods of man's history to find explanations for many of our acts to-day, whose motives are derived from prehistoric times. Hundreds of thousands of people are spending their lives to bring into existence a League of Nations, a World Court or some sort of unity for the entire human race, without any understanding of the primitive forces that still motivate a large proportion of the activities of present day so-called civi-

lized man. In the study of the dancing of primitive people today, lie important secrets of emotional, spiritual and intuitive values, getting at the very root of man's most cogent, impelling motives where sickness, combat, hunger and fear of the unknown have all been the stuff out of which he wove his dramatic dance rituals. Whenever the savage tribe was presented with any big problem, whether fulfilling a physical need or of developing emotional and spiritual strength to meet the onslaughts of unknown powers they achieved a tribal unity through a fitting dance, and in that unity lay their strength. An understanding of the dance in all ages and in all races and all nations would be to understand the whole of group behavior of the human race. Even in present day Europe, and even in staid and repressed England, the village dances still express and release emotional forces of the community. These are nowhere so movingly described as in Hugh Walpole's novel, "The Portrait of a Man With Red Hair" in the chapter "The Dance Around the Town."

We cannot bring about a real world unity based on lasting values without an understanding of the impulses and the fixed grooves of action of the different races and nationalities which must be combined in this world league.

Everywhere I have observed that where a nation is young, strong and still growing, its dance is in a flourishing condition. When it is old, fading and conserving its powers, its dancing weakens and degenerates. The United States is historically at the place where we should express ourselves in the form of a vigorous, vital, national dance. Inasmuch as we are not of the soil, but all of us transplanted, we have not the hereditary material of our own with which to deal, but must go back to the very wellsprings of human consciousness everywhere and gain a clear perception of the principles and the raw motive materials from which the great dancing of the world was evolved. We must avoid at the same time, the pitfalls of merely imitating

the rhythms of those races which are essentially alien to our own, and the copying of whose dances degenerates the dance and the dancers.

Our Government has seen fit to spend money in sending the scientific research men into the fields of the American Indian to preserve his legend, his music, and his graphic art, but as yet there has been no official recognition to research in the art of the dance, the root from which all these other arts have sprung. On the contrary, there is a frown upon the official brow whenever the Indians perform one of their significant and beautiful ceremonies.

With the mechanical device of the motion picture so marvelously adapted to preserving a record of human movement, there is now no excuse for us not to preserve the dances of all of these fast vanishing tribes of our own, as well as those of the Moros and Igorotes in the Philippine Islands, also under the protection of our flag. We should send trained dancers in company with mechanical technicians into all the countries where the native dancing is still true and untouched by the influence of the white civilization whose history has been one of blight in regard to the arts of all the darker skinned races.

The material in this book is only an indication of what might be done and of further, more scholarly and more scientific work which I hope to be able to do.

In the spring of 1925, Miss Ruth St. Denis and I signed a contract to take our Denishawn Dancers for a twenty-five week tour in the Orient. This was the first time that a group of American dancers—an American Ballet—had ever toured Asia. Our performances were greeted with such cordial response everywhere in the Orient, by both the native peoples and the American and European colonials, that the twenty-five weeks was extended to fifteen months of continuous performing. That is, we gave a performance every night, and sometimes matinee and night, every day of that time unless we were on a boat or a train.

Having loved the Orient from afar for many years, we now were like children going into a long-cherished dream fairyland. We did much more sight-seeing than the ordinary tourist. We were giving our performances every night, we were hunting native dancers and dancing teachers; watching their performances and taking actual lessons from them; we were shopping in the bazaars for costumes, stage properties, musical instruments and draperies for decor; and before our tour was half ended, we were actually producing and rehearsing our own new dances evolved from this native material. In the midst of this fivefold occupation, it was a herculean task to focus my scattered mind each month to write the three thousand word article which I had signed a contract with *The Dance Magazine* to do. Had it not been for the many boat trips of three or four days each, I would have been lost, but these days were given over entirely to my typewriter and thus I turned out the sixteen articles which have appeared monthly in *The Dance Magazine*. It is with the gracious consent of *The Dance Magazine* that I have been allowed to rewrite and rebuild these articles into the present book. My deepest debt of gratitude, however, is to Mrs. Ida Kruse McFarlane of the English Department of the University of Denver, who worked with me for long hours every day during the past summer (1927) to put these articles into book form.

So far as I know, this book will cover the field of dancing in the Orient for the first time in a comprehensive manner. I know that in the years I have tried to study the dancing of the Orient through books and magazine articles, the material has been very scattered, much of it hard to reach, and generally unsatisfactory as to quality. The dancing has been described by professional travelers or people who had no technical knowledge of, nor experience in, the art of the dance. This book, then, is offered not in any sense as a creative work of art, but rather in the light of a much needed text book for dancers and students

of the dance and perhaps an interesting book of travel to the general reader since it presents a fresh point of view, even in regard to countries many times written about by truly great writers.

In order to assist further any one who is really interested in dancing and the Orient, I have appended a bibliography, naming those books and those portions of books which have added to my own store of information, and which give greater detail than I have been able to include in these pages.

Everywhere the dancers and the dancing teachers were generous without any restraint in giving of their time, energy, and information. They welcomed us with open arms and were untiring in their exposition and demonstration of their own native dances. Men like Koshiro Matsumoto of Japan, Mei Lan Fang of China, Po Sein of Burma, Kodrad of Java, have made me still more proud of being a dancer for they are all men of fine minds, beautiful bodies and noble character as well as being great dancers. Without this unstinted co-operation of the dancers themselves, this book would not have been possible.

TED SHAWN.

November, 1928.

Chapter I

GODS WHO DANCE

"I should only believe in a God that would know how to dance."

Many years ago, in my first reading of "Thus Spake Zarathustra," my whole being leaped to ecstatic agreement with this credo of Nietzsche's. I had already become aware of the fact that no one person can define God, but that each had inherited or wrought out his own concept of God; that there were, therefore, as many existing concepts of God as there were people alive in the universe.

Testing my own concept of God in the light of the foregoing text, I found that I was worshipping a Divine Dancer—I could not conceive of God being without rhythm, without grace, without intelligent expression, nor without possession of infinite forms of beauty through which to express His infinite Rhythmic Being. Even so it came somewhat as a shock when I definitely agreed within myself that mine was a God who dances—for in spite of everything there still clings to the word "dance" so many associations of triviality and sensuality. However, I found new concepts of the dance when I viewed it in the light of God's activity, and that dancing could be truly great only when it was Infinite Rhythm, Infinite Beauty, Infinite Strength, Lightness, Speed, Grace and Intelligence, finding outlet through the channel of a human dancer.

This essential and inseparable relation between God and dance was not generally accepted in America at the time I left to make an extensive tour of the Far East. But, as I more than half expected, I found that in all of the countries of the Orient

I visited in my eighteen months of search after the forms of dance and the principles from which they sprang, these ancient peoples had believed only in gods who knew how to dance, and that they had come to Nietzsche's conclusion thousands of years before he was born.

Amaterasu, Sun-goddess and Divine Ancestress of the whole Japanese people, in prehistoric days, was so angered by one of the extravagant pranks of her brother, The Strong One, that she retreated into a cave and closed the entrance with a huge boulder. The light being thus withdrawn from the world, the human race and all the lesser gods were terrified. The gods held council how to get Amaterasu out of the cave and so restore the sun to the world. The Strong One tried by brute force to roll the stone from the mouth of the cave but without success. Then Ume-no-utsume, the ugly goddess, but clever withal, brought a huge drum and placed it near the cave entrance. She began to dance on it, making such a thundering noise that Amaterasu's curiosity was aroused. When, through a little crack, she asked what the noise was all about, the wily Ume-no-utsume replied that a more beautiful goddess than Amaterasu had come to the world and the gods were celebrating in her honor. This was too much for Amaterasu's feminine pride, and she cautiously peered out to see her rival. What she saw was her own face in a mirror, which Ume-no-utsume craftily held before her, luring her by her own radiant image out of the cave. The Strong One swiftly closed it again so she could not re-enter.

Thus a dance was instrumental in preserving the sun for the world and the Japanese revere the sacred and divine origin of dancing to this day. I have seen in Nara at the Kasuga shrine and at the Shrine of Ise at Yamada, the Shinto priestesses dancing the kagura which is directly derived from the dance of Ume-no-utsume.

In India, I found a whole pantheon of gods who dance. In

A Cambodian Siva between two Hindu bronzes of Krishna

one of the many dialogues between Krishna and Arjuna through which so much of Indian philosophy is revealed, Krishna states that dancing is the chief activity of all the gods. Siva, third member of the Hindu Triad, seems to be the chief dancer of this divine ballet. One of his best known titles is Nataraja or Lord of the Dance. The mythological story of Siva's Dance is told by Havell in his book, "The Himalayas in Indian Art," thus:

Once upon a time, it is said, Siva, disguised as a yogi, came to a forest hermitage to argue with certain Rishis who held heretical doctrines. He easily defeated them in argument, and they in a rage tried to destroy him by black magic, first by creating a fierce tiger in the sacrificial fire. Siva seized it in its spring, stripped off its skin with the nail of his little finger and wrapped it as a garment about his loins. Then they created a venomous serpent which Siva took and wreathed as a garland around his neck and began to dance. Next an evil spirit shaped like an ugly dwarf rushed out of the fire. But Siva crushed it under his foot, broke its back and then resumed his triumphant dance, the Dance of the Cosmic Rhythm, with all of the Devas and all of the Rishis as witnesses.

The feeling for Siva's dance that every Hindu has is really tremendous. Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, in his book of "Fourteen Indian Essays," has devoted one entire chapter to the Dance of Siva. He says, "Whatever the origins of Siva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the activity of God which any art or religion can boast of."

In the Boston Museum, wherein Dr. Coomaraswamy is Curator of East Indian Art, there are two beautiful bronze images of Siva as Nataraja, the first of the Dancing Sivas I ever saw. Some time later I saw another very ornamental Nataraja in the Musée Guimet in Paris, and again within the last two years I have seen the best examples in existence in the museums of Calcutta, Madras and Colombo.

In the Nataraja aspect of Siva he is seen performing his Cosmic Dance. Havell and Coomaraswamy, Gangoly and Krishna Sastri, most scholarly critics of East Indian art, are all agreed that the Cosmic Dance is made up of five movements. Of these the first movement is that of Creation—out of the rhythm of Siva's dance the Universe was born; the second movement is that of Preservation—by the rhythm of Siva's dance is the Universe sustained in equilibrium; the third movement is Destruction—forms must be destroyed so that forms may be reborn, and Siva's favorite dancing place is the burning ghats; the fourth movement is Reincarnation or Illusion—through many lives, through the illusions of material existence, Siva's divine dancing figure leads the way; the fifth and last movement is Salvation or Ultimate Release—eventually each of us and everything becomes aware that it always has been a part of the rhythm of Siva's eternal dance—a Nirvana, Samadhi, Heaven, call it what you will, of blissful, eternal, rhythmic and expressive activity. the activity of the God-consciousness.

Kali, Goddess of Destruction, Siva's consort, is imaged as dancing. She is seen with dishevelled hair and protruding

tongue, with blood trickling from the corners of her mouth, a necklace of human heads hung round her neck and an apron of dead men's heads round her waist as she dances on the prostrate body of her husband, Time. Sir James Woodruffe, great authority of Hindu ritual, explains Kali's dance in the following words:

The scene of the dance is the cremation ground, amidst white sun-dried bones and fragments of flesh, gnawed and pecked at by carrion beasts and birds. He the heroic (vira) worshipper (sadhaka) performs at dead of night his awe-inspiring rituals. Kali is set in such a scene, for She is that aspect of the Great Power which withdraws all things unto Herself at and by the dissolution of the universe. He alone worships without fear who has abandoned all worldly desires and seeks union with Her as the One Blissful and Perfect Experience. On the burning ground all worldly desires are burned away. She is naked and dark like a threatening raincloud, for She who is Herself beyond mind and speech reduces all living things into that worldly "nothingness" which, as the Void (Shunya) of all which we know, is at the same time the All (Purna) which is Light and Peace. She is naked, being clothed in space alone (Digambara), because the Great Power is unlimited; further She is Herself beyond Maya (Mayatita) that Power of Herself with which She covers Her own nature and so creates all universes. She stands upon the white corpse-like (Shavarupa) body of Siva. He is white, because He is the illuminating (Prakesha) transcendental aspect of Consciousness. He is inert, because the Changeless aspect of the Supreme, and She the apparently changing aspect of the same, being twin aspects of the One who is changelessness in, and exists as change.

Not only is there terror and majesty in the legends of Indian gods who dance, but there is also humor. One story tells that there was once a dispute between Siva and his consort Kali as to who was better in the art of dancing. Siva danced many a dance and Kali successfully followed him; till at last, in order to suppress her pride, Siva lifted up one of his legs to the

level of the top of his crown and danced on. Kali was too modest to imitate Siva in this performance, and thus by default permitted Siva to be acclaimed by the gods the champion of dancers. This dance of Siva's is referred to as the Urdhva-Tandava.

And Ganesha, the elephant-headed god, Siva's son, is often pictured as dancing—a baby god "leading out his satyr troops to join in the cosmic revels."

The Hindu feeling for the god Krishna is beautiful and tender. The best known dance legend of India, outside of India, is that of Krishna and Radha. There are dance episodes throughout all of Krishna's life. One nursery rhyme tells of Krishna as a winsome, mischievous little-boy-God, who stole butter from the milkmaids' churns, and danced eating the butterball. In the Madras museum are two bronze figures of Krishna's "Butterball Dance." I myself have bought little bronzes of this playful dance of Krishna's in several bazaars of South India.

"Another story of the boy Krishna" which H. Krishna Sastri cites:

is represented in his dance on the head of a serpent named Kaliya (the black). Kaliya was hiding in a pond in Yamuna river, making the whole neighborhood poisonous to all living beings. One day the cattle tended by Krishna strayed into this region and were poisoned. Krishna then plunged into the pond and holding the viper by the tail in one hand began to dance heavily on his raised hoods. The demon writhed under the pressure of the god's tiny feet, vomiting blood profusely from each of his several mouths, and was completely exhausted and overcome. Then at last the serpent Kaliya recognized the Lord and took himself away to a remote island in the far-off sea. The esoteric sense of this is clear. The serpent represents the embodiment of all that is vile and wicked in this world; the dance of Krishna represents the fight with evil and its final conquest by the Divine Spirit.

Siva outwits Kali in the dance contest

Ume-no-utsume dances on the drum

The most famous story of all of Krishna's legends, however, is during his later life when he stands for the Divine Lover to all young maidens.

Radha, one of the fair milkmaids of Brindavana, with her companions, comes to the river Jumna to bathe. Krishna, always mischievous, hiding in a tree watches the girls bathing, and slips down quietly to hide their sarees. Upon discovering the god, all the girls flee but Radha, who pleads and demands the return of her garments. The story ends with Radha becoming the wife of Krishna, and being taken into immortality and divinity with him. This legend, with endless amplifications and details is made the basis of all Indian dancing. Every posture and movement of the Nautch girls of India to-day, derives from some part of the Radha-Krishna legend. Ballets giving the whole story in dance drama form, ending with the Ras-

mandalay, a dance of celebration around Radha and Krishna, are danced by the devidassis in the temple rituals.

The Indian gods who dance are legion, and the themes of their dances with spiritual truths symbolized therein are innumerable.

Just as Christianity came into the western world at a time when the Pagan forms had become orgiastic, so Buddhism developed in India at a period when Hindu religious forms had become particularly degenerate. Buddhism was a religion of reform and asceticism. The Buddha refers to dancing, music and poetry as among the arts of the courtesan. Later, however, he made a place for the arts as an activity for laymen, as differentiated from the monks, the Brothers of the Yellow Robe. And yet it is an ironic fact that to-day, in all Buddhist countries, not only is dancing in a robust condition, but there is more actual dancing connected with Buddhism itself than almost any other religion.

Perhaps it is that Buddhism is not a religion, but a system of ethics—a code of behavior; that it did not supplant or destroy the religion of the people previous to its coming, but adjusted itself and fitted in with the gods that were already worshipped. Perhaps this explains it—for in Burma, Ceylon, and Tibet, three of the countries where Buddhism is the official religion of the country and where it is most powerful, I have seen dancing in connection with Buddhist temples and Buddhist religious festivals. This then means that the primitive people of Tibet, of Burma and of Ceylon had gods who danced, and that Buddhism slowly absorbed both the gods and their dancing—rejecting neither the one nor the other.

I have seen in the Bhutia Monastery of Darjeeling, Tibetan Lamas, who are uddhist monks, dance an elaborate and solemn dramatic and symbolic legend; I have seen in Kandy, Singhalese Devil-Dancers performing by the light of torches and to the beating of drums, their ecstatic dance before the elephant who

bore the Tooth of the Buddha; I have seen dancers sway and bend on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon to pay homage in this beautiful way to the Blessed One. On the sculptured walls of Borobudur in Java, exquisite groups of dancers are pictured in the graven chapters of Gautama's Life, as they are also in the museum at Sarnath and in Lahore. Dancing is woven throughout the whole fabric of Buddhist life and goes farther back than the Buddha himself to the gods whom he was too beneficent to banish.

In Siam and Cambodia, the sculptured gods of Angkor-Vat have danced divinely for nearly a thousand years, and the dancing of every man and maid in those countries is consciously patterned after these divine models. The dancing of the royal ballet at Pnom-Penh has been adequately described as the "divertissement of goddesses." There is no question but that the constant contemplation of these divinely inspired bas-reliefs and the meditation upon the spiritual principles in them embodied, have produced a quality of movement which could never have been produced by any lesser ideal or motive.

In Java, slim princesses weave a magic spell with their dances in the Sultan's court at Djockjakarta and Soerakarta. Every one who sees them feels the uncanny power of these royal maidens, which comes undoubtedly from the fact that before the Islamic invasion, Java was a Hindu country. The same dancing gods were worshipped, and were worshipped in dance rituals. The forbears of to-day's dancing princesses, were devidassis, or dancing temple priestesses, who tried so to consecrate their bodies and their minds that the spirits of the gods would inhabit their bodies and dance in them.

This brings me to Islam, and the Prophet. So far as I know, there is no mention of dancing in the Koran. Certainly I do not know of any approval or advocacy of it there. However, in practice, the dervishes—some of whom I have seen dance in Tunisia and Algeria, constantly express the religious impulse in the

dance. The ones I saw belonged to one of the self-torturing sects, whereas the whirling dervishes of Syria and Turkey approach their god through music and rhythm. W. B. Seabrook, interviewing the head of the Mevlevi, a sect of Whirling Dervishes in Syrian Tripoli, gives the following as a statement of the principles of Union with God which the Dervishes believe can best be attained through rhythm, music and dance:

The term "dervish" is applied to more than thirty different sects of Islam, whose monasteries are scattered throughout the entire Moslem world from the Bosporus to China.

These sects are alike in that all are mystic and alike in the sense that all are religious fraternities sprung from the Sufi philosophy. But here the similarity ceases. All are known as dervishes, as members of Christian religious fraternities go by the name of monks. But they differ—even more widely than Christian monastic societies—in rules of living, dress, theology and ritual.

The object of all mysticism is the apprehension, through contemplation and ecstasy, of truths more profound than any which can be arrived at by logic or cold reason. The ultimate goal of the mystic is oneness with God, but the paths toward this goal are divergent. One school seeks to attain this higher state through pain and fasting, through destruction of all sensuous desire and pleasure. To this school belong all ascetics, of whatever creed, who practice chastity, poverty, penance, and self-torture. To it, among dervish sects, belong the Bektashi, who are beggars vowed to poverty; the Rufai, or Howling Dervishes, who slash their bodies with knives and burn themselves with red-hot irons; the Sadi, or Fire-eaters, who practice magic, seem to devour red coals and bite the heads from poisonous serpents.

But we others, we Mevlevi, believe that soul and body are alike divine—that the soul grows, like a flower, on the body's stem. We accept material beauty as the true mirror of divine beauty. And we seek this divine beauty, this ineffable harmony in which all things become as one, through the most nearly perfect of sensuous forms—the rhythm of music and the dance.

One of our legends is that the Prophet, after experiencing a

transcendent illumination, imparted to Ali certain inner mysteries, enjoining him to keep them hid since they were not for the common mind. The secret swelled in Ali's breast, and he fled to the desert for fear it would burst out. Coming to a little oasis and seeking to drink at a spring, he opened his mouth, and the secret spilled out into the water. Months later a wandering shepherd cut and fashioned into a flute a reed that he found growing at the edge of this spring. When he played, melodies of such ravishing beauty were born that his flock forgot to graze, and, when other nomads heard him playing, their hearts were melted and they wept for joy. Finally, it chanced, Mahomet heard the shepherd's piping and swooned at the sound. On recovering, he said, "Ali has betrayed the secret; for this flute sings of the holy mystery!"

This feeling about the dance is held also in China. There I talked with Mei Lan Fang, the greatest actor-dancer of that country. He gave me a picture of himself in one of his famous dances—entitled, The Goddess of Lo Scattering Flowers; and declared with other Orientals that the gods do dance, and that when one dances, it is the expression of the god within you.

Nor is the conception of dancing as the most appropriate activity of God confined to Orientals. The huge tomes of Dr. J. G. Fraser's The Golden Bough are filled with examples of primitive peoples who by dancing sought to imitate and become one with their God. Havelock Ellis in his masterpiece, The Dance of Life, says of primitive peoples, "To dance was at once to worship and to pray. . . . The gods themselves danced, as the stars dance in the sky—so at least the Mexicans, and we may be sure many other peoples have held; and to dance is therefore to imitate the gods, to work with them, perhaps to persuade them to work in the direction of our own desire. . . . To dance is to take part in the cosmic control of the world. Every sacred Dionysian dance is an imitation of the divine dance."

Edward Carpenter in his Pagan and Christian Creeds corroborates Ellis in the statement that the mysteries of ancient Greece

and Egypt consisted largely of dancing, and that this dancing was designed to bring the celebrant into oneness with his god.

Those of us who are Christians, and who have been brought up in church-going families, feel the influence of the theology which dominated our youth. We are inclined to say, "But all of these peoples are 'heathen.' What has all this to do with Christianity and our enlightened concept of God—certainly the Christian God does not dance."

No, the God of many self-styled Christians to-day does not dance. He is a God of dull dignity. As a race and as a nation we do not play with God, as my good friend Dhan Gopal Mukerji tells me the Hindus do. Evidently these hardened and forbidding conceptions of God are of the latter days of Christianity. When Christianity was fresh and vital and young we read a different story. In this vein there is a fine passage in Havelock Ellis's "Dance of Life":

> What by some is considered to be the earliest known Christian ritual—the "Hymn of Jesus" assigned to the second century—is nothing but a sacred dance. Eusebius in the third century stated that Philo's description of the worship of the Therapeuts agreed at all points with Christian custom, and that meant the prominence of dancing, to which indeed Eusebius often refers in connection with Christian worship. It has been supposed by some that the Christian Church was originally a theatre, the choir being the raised stage, even the word "choir," it is argued, meaning an enclosed space for dancing. It is certain that at the Eucharist the faithful gesticulated with their hands, danced with their feet, flung their bodies about. Chrysostom, who referred to this behavior round the Holy Table at Antioch, only objected to drunken excesses in connection with it; the custom itself he evidently regarded as traditional and right.
>
> While the central function of Christian worship is a sacred drama, a divine pantomime, the associations of Christianity and dancing are by no means confined to the ritual of the Mass and its later more attenuated transformations. The very idea of dancing had a sacred and mystic meaning to the early Christians, who

Ted Shawn performing his Cosmic Dance of Siva at the Siva temple Mahabalipuram, India

had meditated profoundly on the text, "We have piped unto you and ye have not danced." Origen prayed that above all things there may be made operative in us the mystery "of the stars dancing in Heaven for the salvation of the Universe." So that the Monks of the Cistercian Order, who in later age worked for the world more especially by praying for it ("orare est laborare"), were engaged in the task on earth as the stars in Heaven; dancing and praying are the same thing. St. Basil, who was so enamored of natural things, described the angels dancing in Heaven, and the author of the Dieta Salutis (said to have been St. Bonaventura), which is supposed to have influenced Dante in assigning so large a place to dancing in the Paradise, described dancing as the occupation of the inmates of Heaven, and Christ as the leader of the dance. Even in more modern times an ancient Cornish carol sang of the life of Jesus as a dance, and represented him as declaring that he died in order that man "may come unto the general dance."

There are many intimations of a change of spirit. One of the progressive Christian ministers of America wrote a stimulating article called A New God for America. It is obvious that our old concepts of God are becoming woefully inadequate to satisfy us at the present state of our spiritual and intellectual development. Furthermore, in spite of all European sneers, we are demanding a concept of God which includes the idea of Beauty. We are trying to think creatively for ourselves, we are longing to express order, symmetry, proportion, rhythm, deep and abiding joy in our lives. Our new concept of God must be big enough to include all these things. We cannot be encumbered with the grave, patriarchal, theological tribal God which we have inherited.

America's new God will dance. We are approaching the era of the fullness of our power and vitality. No nation in the world to-day is so avid for spiritual growth. The enormous followings of all the weird religious cults, and the huge audiences of quack-Messiahs are not so much a proof of our gullibility as of the fact that we are interested in religious and metaphysical matters, and that we are determined to seek the Truth even in strange and unlikely places. The vast mechanisms of our mills and factories are an expression of our tremendous feeling for rhythm which has first set so much matter into productive vibration, and which will then turn itself to rhythms of the soul and their expression in forms of beauty and intelligence. The extraordinary popularity of Jazz which radiating outward from America has penetrated the far corners of the earth, is the outpouring of an exuberant and joyous vitality. It is first expressed in the chaos of shimmy, Charleston and Black Bottom, but as the flow cuts for itself definite channels it will take higher and better forms without losing its gaiety or vitality.

America's God will dance, and does dance. I know it, for I am American and my God dances. When my whole being is ordered,

harmonious, pulsing with the sap of life, and when my intellect becomes the tool of my spirit and expresses the spirit's substance in virile grace and radiant charm—then I can speak as spake Zarathustra—"Now there danceth a God in me."

Chapter II

POPULAR AND THEATRICAL DANCING IN JAPAN

For one solid month, after our arrival in Japan, we saw dancing upon every possible occasion. Nowhere in the world can so much dancing, and of such high order, be seen within a month of time. For in Japan there are many homes of the Kabuki—the popular theatre. The three great cities of the Kabuki—Tokio, Osaka, and Kyoto—are, in the light of our American sense of distance, very near together. In these three cities the great theatre establishments maintain their dancers on long time contracts and, since dancing is an important part of every bill, one can, by visiting all the important theatres, see at any time all of Japan's great actor-dancers.

Two peoples of the world enjoy great reputation for courtesy and politeness: the French and the Japanese. We of America have all our lives heard of the admirable courtesy of the French, but when we actually experienced the courtesy of the Japanese we found a quality in it for which we were unprepared. They seem really to care that you be comfortable, that you have pleasure, or even that you be given opportunity to see what you need and wish to see. Because we were dancers and because we stated our desire to study deeply and sincerely the dancing of Japan we were taken to many delightful performances of all varieties of dancing. So we saw the Noh, or the ancient classic dance of Japan; out-of-door dancing at Hibiya Park, done by great stars for charity benefit; geisha dancing by the reigning beauties of the day; and also the great ballets and dance dramas that are pre-

sented in the Imperial Theatre, the Kabuki-za, the Ichimura-za, the Shimbashi Embujo, and those of the other Kabuki theatres. Besides all these, many special performances of dances have been especially arranged for us which otherwise would have been impossible for us to see.

Furthermore, from Koshiro Matsumoto and his wife, Madame Fujima, Miss St. Denis and I took daily lessons. These two charming and gifted artists have a school that is recognized by the Japanese themselves as the finest in Japan. Koshiro Matsumoto is not only the greatest of dancing instructors in his country but he stands as one of the greatest actor-dancers on the stage of Japan to-day. Each evening we were able to view his performance for several hours at the Kabuki-za Theatre, in Tokio, before the time of our own performance at the Imperial Theatre. For the real Japanese theatre gives a bill that lasts from three o'clock to midnight. Indeed dancing is understood and appreciated and loved by the Japanese people as a whole much in the same way that Grand Opera is by the Italians. I find that my Japanese man-servant at the hotel knows not only the names but the story and music and history of a great number of famous dances. Dancing enters profoundly into the culture of the people.

On the imaginative and mythical background of its fabled origin, the dance in Japan broadens out to vastness. The early religious dances are a class by themselves, most important because they are the sources of most of the present day dancing in Japan. Later came the Bugaku, a type brought from China and earlier even than the religious dance. But so different is the essential conception of Japanese dancing from our own that I must begin by making some description of the general impression of it upon American eyes. Our theatrical dancing has been derived from the European ballet. Thus we are accustomed to leaps, tours jetés, and rapid pirouettes. An important part of the excellence of the ballet dancer is his or her air work. The first great

difference then which strikes us in Japanese dancing is that there is, practically speaking, no air work at all, at least one flat foot is kept on the ground all the time. The next obvious difference is that whereas the ballet dancer strives for years to be "well turned out" the Japanese dancer has apparently worked just as hard to be "well turned in." Contrary to the pointed toe in air positions the Japanese foot is nearly always bent upward at the ankle rather than stretched downward. Thus, from the standpoint of European ballet, the Japanese dance is at all points almost the complete antithesis.

However, during our years in California, we had studied the dancing of the Orient with sympathy and had had considerable opportunity to study Japanese dances from native Japanese teachers there; so we came to Japan with eyes already somewhat prepared.

There are several notable features of Japanese dancing, any one of which would signally distinguish it. For one thing it is definitely dramatic. With few exceptions Japanese dancing tells a story. Most of the dances are actual little dance-dramas in which two or more people engage, each enacting a character or part. Even in solo dancing there is a narrative and an emotional underlying pattern. As an example let me recount the following:

On the night after our arrival in Japan we were given a Japanese reception at the Maple Leaf Club or Koyokwan. It was as if we had been transported into fairy land. The building, itself, stood on a hill in the midst of one of those famous Japanese gardens which are perfection in miniature. We had laid off our shoes at the door and walked on soft padded matting floors through long rooms in restrained elegance of good taste until we came to a great dining room. There some seventy or eighty Japanese gentlemen, of social importance in Tokio, were already seated upon flat cushions around the room forming a hollow square. We, too, sat upon our feet on cushions with armrests at our sides and low lacquered tables in front of us. Then came

Kikugoro Onoe—a famous actor-dancer

"Sambaso"—a puppet dance

Kikugoro in "Yasuna"

beautiful Japanese girls, in gorgeous kimonos and with incredibly elaborate coiffures, to serve us. We sampled many, many courses of Japanese food, eating always with chopsticks, and drank tiny cups of "sake"—hot rice wine. Finally at the open end of the room screens were placed as a background and two dance-dramas were performed for our entertainment. They bore the strangely beautiful names of "Hagoromo" and "Hidari Jingoro."

Through the kindness of our host Mr. Yamamoto, Director General of the Imperial Theatre, quaint versions of the stories of these little dance plays were presented to each of us. This is what we read:

" 'Hagoromo' is the old musical drama, accompanying Shamisen music which borrowing from Noh Play. In 1911, at the opening of the Imperial Theatre, 'Hagoromo' performed for the sake of opening it. Synopsis: 'Once upon a time, an angel comes dancing down to Miho. Miho is noted for the fine view of Mt. Fuji. She looks a while captivated by scenery and leaving behind the 'Hagoromo,' a robe of feathers, the angel wears—which taken off on the branch of a pine-tree near sea shore. A fisherman finds it out by chance. When he returns home carrying it, she comes to see him and begs to give back it as without the robe of feathers she can't ascend Heaven's Home. The fisherman knowing it is the angel's robe, wants her to dance for him instead of giving it back to her. After dancing a while for him she goes up in mid-air in dancing far away, leaving thanks for him.

" 'Hidari Jingoro' is the famous left-handed sculptor at the Tokugawa Period. Many of Jingoro's carvings have marvelous traditions attached to them. (You can find his work at the temple or shrine everywhere in Japan.) This dance is also based upon one of his traditions. Synopsis: It is said his works are animated by his soul, the figure of animal in his carvings acts sometimes just like living creatures. Once Jingoro falls in love with a so beautiful girl at first sight that he is shaked his resolution to carve her figure imaginally, and he consoles himself by seeing it for

his vacant love. The imagined Doll begins unexpectedly to operate and talk with him, but its soul animated like male in rough manner, as the sculptors own, in spite of female figure. Then he trys put a mirror into her breast to make female, as old Japanese believed that a mirror is to be woman's soul. Doing so, she moves just like female way, and he speaks to her about his love as if meeting with his real lover and then to make company in drinking. During she is dancing, if the mirror drops to floor, the way of dancing changes to male immediately, on the contrary, when she picks up and put the mirror into her breast, soon the actions turns to female manner."

Both of these dance plays are adaptations from "Noh" dances, which date back to the thirteenth century. In the eyes of the patrons of the "Noh" this popularized version is a decadence, but to our vision, fresh from the indecencies of Broadway and the nervous jerking of mechanical and orgiastic jazz, these dances were the very essence of dignity, of aristocratic opulence and slow restrained grace. They were performed by women, which is also, in this type of dancing, something of an innovation, inasmuch as all female roles in the "Noh" dances and in the popular Kabuki theatres are played by men dressed in female costume. The actual dancing by women was, until recent years, confined entirely to geisha dancing which is the most popular and at the same time the least artistically valued.

The costuming of all Japanese dancing is extremely gorgeous. Always the most expensive materials are used—gold brocades, silks and satins, governed by a very rigid tradition as to pattern and way of wearing. The emotions have been rendered through centuries into such symbolic gestures that they do not appear on the surface. The symbolism extends even to the costuming. For instance the feather robe of the angel of "Hagoromo" had not a feather on it. It was of a gorgeous brocade in which was woven the design of a beautiful mythological bird. To us it was extremely exotic. Sitting in the very presence of these plays watch-

ing every move with dance-trained eyes nevertheless we were baffled about the emotional meaning of the dramas.

One dance followed on another's heels. The very next night, we were taken to a performance in Hibiya Park where there is a charming new open air theatre. The occasion was a charity benefit performance, and the program consisted entirely of dancing. The first number was a comedy dance-drama, using three characters. Here the comedy was at all times quite evident to us and so delicious that we joined the Japanese audience in laughing out loud. The second section of the program was Mr. Koshiro Matsumoto, who later became our teacher, with two of his pupils, boys of about fourteen, in an elaborate dance called "The Lion Festival Dance." They wore only their street clothes of kimono and hakima, a kind of huge trouser or divided skirt worn by gentlemen over their kimonos.

This type of dance, which is done without theatrical costume, is called "su-odori." Let me explain that the popular dancing of Japan falls into two classifications; that which is very slow and deals almost entirely in postures is called "mai," while the more rapid and physically vigorous dancing is grouped under the head of "odori." Of these "odori" there are hundreds. Their range is wide; they comprise measures for old and young, for winter and summer, for earth, sea and sky, and for the whole gamut of the emotions.

The Shinto cult, which consists mainly of ancestor worship, has also given rise to many popular songs and dances.

"At a certain time of the year," writes Marcelle Hincks, "the spirits of the departed are supposed to visit the world and Shintoism orders that they shall be welcomed cheerfully, with singing and dancing, and the Bon-odori are danced for this purpose, in August, through country districts. Every province has its special form of Bon dance, the details of the steps and postures differing considerably in different parts of Japan. The main feature, however, usually remains the same. The peasants form a great

circle, a living wheel, which revolves now slowly, now swiftly, whilst they posture and express their feelings by means of sleeve-wavings and conventional gestures. It is easy to describe the actual steps and attitudes, but how express the subtle charm, which it casts upon the spectator? To a European the sight seems unreal, and so new and strange that at first he cannot grasp its meaning, and he can scarcely realize that the dancers are actually creatures of flesh and blood like himself. Little fairy-like figures glide about in the white, ghostly moonlight, their long soft sleeves waving like wings; their rhythmical and precise paces are silent and muffled, their gestures are mysterious and expressive of worship, their song mingles with occasional soft hand-clapping. All is done with unreal and uncanny smoothness and facility. In watching the strange scene one wonders whether these are not the ghostly shadows of the peasants who danced the Bon-odori two thousand years ago. As the great wheel revolves one again wonders what matter, after all, whether they be of yesterday or to-day; they are, as their lord Buddha has taught, the same, but with new faces.

"Another beautiful odori, less weird and suggestive than this Bon, is danced by little maidens of seven or eight years of age. On the seventh day of the seventh month the Tanabata-odori is danced to celebrate the union of two stars, the Herd Boy Prince and the Weaver Princess, a tale of Chinese origin. The children are decked in sumptuous costumes, with crimson undergarments, a sash of gold and purple, a fantastic head-dress of silver pins and tortoise-shell, a kerchief bound round their heads, and they carry highly ornamental miniature drums, on which they beat the rhythm of their song with little lacquered drum-sticks. The nurses who accompany this gay company are no less gorgeously equipped, but instead of drums they carry brightly painted umbrellas. The measures trod by the little maids are simple, for the long heavy satin robes do not allow much freedom of movement.

"A contrast to this is the Gebon-odori, the local dance of Wakayama, in which seventy or eighty merchants take part. Their costumes are fanciful; black surcoats are worn over their white garments, and the hats are adorned with many-hued artificial

flowers. They carry gourds, umbrellas, gongs, drums, and in dancing they chant a religious formula.

"These are types of the innumerable dances of the kind in vogue throughout Japan, which vary according to the locality, each province, town or village having its special measures. But bright costumes, usually having a symbolical meaning, various accessories—flowers, nets, caskets, jewels and expressive gesticulation, are the chief characteristics of the odori in every part of the country."

The last section of the dance program in Hibiya Park was a gorgeous ballet done by eighteen young actress-dancers from the Imperial Theatre. They were all costumed alike in very beautifully designed costumes of wistaria colored kimonos with scarlet and gold brocaded obis—the huge sash worn by all Japanese women—and with a head-dress of many glittering and exquisite ornaments. These girls moved through a long and intricate dance, doing marvelous things with their fans,—fans that were at one moment fluttering down to represent the falling of petals from the cherry trees; hidden under the sleeve with just the curved edge visible to represent the moon rising from behind the hill; or two fans held in one hand to represent a great butterfly. The fan, indeed, is an article in the dancer's equipment which is capable of expressing an infinite number of ideas. I have seen in a "Kyogen," which is the farce performed in the "Noh" theatre between "Noh" plays, the fan used as a sword, and as a flying bird, and even as a pan in which chestnuts were roasted.

To go back to the ballet in Hibiya Park: the girls were costumed to represent the daughters of Samurai who were military nobles of ancient Japan. While the rhythms were complicated beyond even our comprehension their concerted ensemble had that flawless accuracy which we have learned to associate with the Tiller girls. The difficulties these Japanese dancers avoid by not having to do acrobatic stunts are more than made up by the

"The Three Drunkards"—a comedy dance

difficulty of the fan technique. What they do with the fan is almost past belief.

After we had been in Japan for nearly a week we attended our first real geisha party at the Shinfukui Tea House. The modern geisha is not, as Europeans think, merely a pretty waitress in a tea-house, who makes dancing an excuse for displaying her beauty; she is, above all, an artist in a fine sense of the word. The technical skill required for the geisha dances is only acquired by long years of patient practice and study. At an early age, seven or eight years, the child destined for this career is sent to a house where she learns various accomplishments. She is taught singing and poetry, besides dancing, and after years of hard work becomes a full fledged geisha ready to charm with her artistic accomplishments, her winning smile, and her gracious manner. As she performs her pantomimic dances, one sees that the geisha, like her ancestor the Shirabyoshi, has as much intelligence as she has grace of body and skill of hand and foot. Every movement is suggestive, every gesture expressive. The turn of the head, the glances, the hands—the slender mobile hands—are exquisite poems in themselves. There is a fine economy that tells

in one movement the rising of the moon, with the next, the writing of a poem to the moon, with the third, a brushing away of tears.

The girls at this party were from many different geisha schools, some of them dancing together for the first time that evening. Yet in ensemble numbers they all did the same dance so well that we could not detect any unevenness or flaw. The fact is that these dances have been done in traditional manner for literally hundreds of years, and every geisha school teaches the same dances in exactly the same way, so that girls engaged for a party may come from different schools and yet perform a long, elaborate and complicated dance together without previous rehearsal.

One of the dances of the evening was done without a fan or any other object in the hands and was more rapid and more definitely rhythmic in our sense than other Japanese dances. It was called "Kappore" and consisted of a great deal of hand clapping, of slapping the hands against the knees and patting certain parts of the body, all in rapid and intricate rhythm.

Again within the circle of Japanese courtesy to us came our experience with some of the finest theatrical dancing in the world. It was that of a dance-drama called "Momiji-Gari or a Maple Leaf Viewing Party." This drama was originally written for Danjuro Ichikawa the Ninth, the greatest actor during the Meiji Era, by Mokuami Kawatake, probably the most famous dramatist of that period. It was Koshiro Matsumoto, my teacher, the leading disciple of Danjuro, who took the role of the demon, as his master before him had done. This classical piece, which is famous, has been staged in Tokio almost every year since its premier presentation many years ago.

Mr. Koshiro Matsumoto in private life is now a man of about fifty years of age. He is not slender, and is beginning to be noticeably bald, and quite grey at the temples, but when he appears as the Lady Sarashina in the opening of this dance-drama,

Geisha dancers

he is the most radiant example of feminine beauty that I have ever seen on the Japanese stage. He is more elegant, and more feminine with a deep and dignified womanliness than any real woman-actress. The change which he makes from the noble court lady to the frightful demon is incredible. The accompanying photographs will give some slight idea of the versatility of this great artist. The demon picture does not show the fact that the wig extends down the back and trails on the ground some three feet. Through this long dance he whirls the wig round and round through the air, a physical feat sufficient to daunt an athletic youth in his prime.

The synopsis of "Momiji-Gari" is as follows:

Several hundred years ago Koremochi, a great general, comes to Mount Togakushi accompanied by two retainers to view the beautiful leaves of autumn and finds that a party for viewing the maple leaves is being given there. Upon inquiring the identity of the person giving the party, the general is told that he is a person of high rank who has come there incognito, and that his name cannot be disclosed.

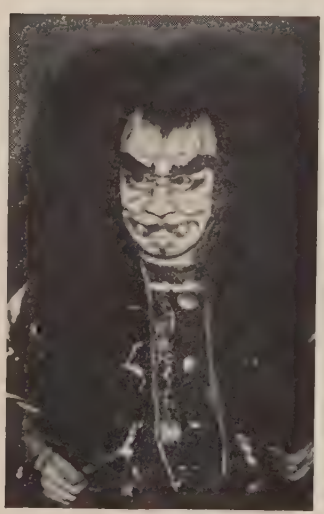
Because of the fact that only women are present, the general is seized with curiosity to have a look at them, and approaches them secretly when several ladies and Lady Sarashina also make their appearance to entertain him. The general accepts courtesy, and drinks sake. Lady Sarashina pours sake into the lord's cup herself, and proceeds to entertain him with her graceful dancing. While watching her dance, the general and his retainers suddenly become drowsy and finally fall asleep. Lady Sarashina, while dancing, had approached the general several times, but when she was ready to attack him she looked as if frightened at something, and had continued to dance. When she finds the men asleep, she appears to make a decision. Taking her attendants with her, Lady Sarashina leaves the lord and his retainers to prepare for what she is about to do. The sky becomes overcast, and an approaching storm renders the scene dreary.

The spirit of a mountain god appears and gives a warning to the sleeping general, predicting that this continued stay there

Koshiro Matsumoto in private life

Koshiro as the Lady Sarashina

Ennosuke Ichikawa as Mountain God



Koshiro as the Demon in Momiji-Gari

will make him fall prey to a demon. Urging him to awaken immediately, the spirit disappears. This supernatural warning arouses the general from sleep. He believes the warning to be due to the protection of the God Hachiman, the God of War, in whom he believes. Finding the surrounding atmosphere strange, the general entertains doubt about Lady Sarashina. He immediately gives chase to the absent lady.

When found by him Lady Sarashina answers his challenge and fights him. The beautiful woman declares that her disguise can no longer be maintained, due to the miraculous power of the general's sword, and, announcing that she will show her true form, transforms herself into a demon. The demon loses the fight, however, and, while retreating, climbs a nearby tree, and blows flames from its mouth at the victorious general.

After this lapse of time I still count this dance-drama one of the most remarkable performances I have ever seen in my life. I attended it seven times and found my attention held to the very last moment. During the final dramatic dance of the demon in the fight with the general I could hardly breathe and cold perspiration would break out upon me. The dancing is of a very high order all the way through, by a very remarkable company. Indeed I have never seen in any European ballet so high a standard maintained throughout the cast. There are little dances by the ladies in attendance upon Sarashina, and other solo dances by the general's retainers. The dance of the Mountain God is a superb piece of work; he keeps a continuous insistent rhythm going all the time, while superimposing great dramatic expression and achieving a certain number of extraordinary stunts so artistically welded into the dance as not to be offensive. One of the retainers of the general does a dance in which he pretends to be a blind man tapping along the road with a staff—one of the most subtle and delightful pieces of comedy dancing.

During the thirteen months between our first visit to Japan and our return season I dared to plan an adaptation of "Momiji-

Gari" for our own American tour. I cabled the Imperial Theatre and they agreed to prepare costumes, wigs and properties for me. On my arrival I rehearsed daily under the personal supervision of Koshiro Matsumoto, the dancing, the putting on of the elaborate costumes and wigs, and the amazing make-up. After having performed "Momiji-Gari" more than a hundred times before American audiences I am still under the spell of its consummate intensity.

The theatrical organizations that make possible the production of such dance-dramas are lavishly equipped in every way. The Imperial Theatre had so many rehearsal and practice rooms that it was possible for Miss St. Denis to be working in one room with Madame Fujima, while I worked in another with Mr. Koshiro, himself, and at the same time in the large room our company received instruction from six or seven teachers of the Fujima School. Our lessons were accompanied by samisen and voice. The music is almost entirely on a four-four time basis, but the rhythmic construction is nevertheless often baffling and difficult. Our girls learned fundamental Japanese technique in bodily movement and posture, and a dance with very decorative long staffs supposed to represent spears, at the ends of which were tufts of white horse hair; also another dance with branches of wistaria.

From Mr. Koshiro and Madame Fujima I learned that the very first training given to a beginning class in a Japanese dancing school is the postures of the Gods and Goddesses, thus, even in actual practice, starting the dance at always its true source,—religion.

The Denishawn boys learned, besides the dances in "Momiji-Gari," a duet representing a famous battle between two warrior heroes, Genji and Haiki, one with a sword and the other with a spear. The sword dance of Japan is in a class by itself. I know of no form of dancing that is so thoroughly masculine, and yet ex-

tremely graceful. These are the dances which represent the conflict of ancient Samurais. The sword dancing is based upon an almost continual use of oppositions in the bodily movement and posture. It is definitely dancing in its rhythm and movement, and yet it is a very true exposition of sword technique. I was struck anew with the likeness between Japan and Ancient Greece. Both countries used the dance as a form of military training; both people are alike in their attitude toward the nude body—that it is a right, natural, thoroughly wholesome thing—and both nations find no antagonism between extreme virility and masculine grace and physical beauty. The extraordinary grace of all the men on the Japanese stage, actors as well as dancers, led me to make inquiries. I find that no actor is permitted in the theatre, even as an apprentice, who has not had constant dance training from childhood. The intelligent, beautiful and expressive use of the body is considered the foundation of the drama, and the use of voice is superimposed upon this ground work.

The social dancing of Japan, except for the Bon-odori, previously described, which is more like folk-dancing, is almost nonexistent. I had heard rumors that the Japanese were taking up jazz, but I find that rumor untrue. Here in Tokio ballroom dancing in public cafes is forbidden even to the foreigners, Europeans and Americans. And in the magnificent Imperial Hotel public dances have been stopped. Occasionally, for private parties, a special permit is given.

I have spoken so far entirely about the traditional dance in Japan. But a change is under way. Among the younger generation a progressive spirit is showing itself. Mr. Ennosuke Ichikawa, who dances the rôle of the Mountain God in "Momiji-Gari," considered one of the finest of the younger dancers, has within the last year or two been the prime mover in several experiments towards freer, more modern expression in the dance. He has even created several new ballets which have been very well received. Two other pioneers are Mr. and Mrs. Takata.

A modernistic ballet created by Ennosuke Ichikawa

After a few years of study in Europe and America, they returned to Japan and trained other Japanese dancers in European type of dancing. They have formed their own company and are touring Japan. The response to this courageous effort has been respectful but not enthusiastic.

I find the study of the dance in Japan a subject of inexhaustible interest, with a fund of material the end of which I cannot even see. The Japanese dance is, in spite of its ancient traditions, more robust and more virile and more alive than the European ballet because it is grounded in realities. There are a few teachers in Japan who imitate the countless Russians who, as refugees, have come down into China and Japan. One Japanese teacher in Osaka, a product of this Russian training, gave me many pictures representing his pupils doing toe dancing and eccentric dancing. But toe dancing is, if anything, more unsuited to the Japanese temperament and physique than to the American. A Japanese dancer doing toe dancing is a pitiable and grotesque sight.

It was somewhat disconcerting on our return to Japan after only a year's absence to find current in Japanese theatres many imitations of the popular numbers of our own repertoire.

The truest movement for progress in Japan is that which

delves into the rich mine of native material and brings forth new treasures to continue and develop the old tradition. The only possible real benefit the art dance of America can confer upon Japanese dancing is to point out a method by which the Japanese can produce even more beautiful Japanese dancing.

Chapter III

SACRED, CLASSIC AND COURT DANCES OF JAPAN

The dance holds a dignified and vital place in every department of Japanese life. Whereas in our own country we see dancing only in the ballroom or on the stage, in Japan we see it in the temples, in the tea-houses, in the village squares, in the courtyards of shrines, in the theatres and in special little-theatres maintained by hotels, and even by department stores, for the entertainment of their guests. One place we do not see it, but we known it is going on—in the Court of His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Japan. Of ballroom dancing there is none; the Japanese sensibility holds it immoral and ugly.

After we had finished our first engagement in Tokio, we took our two day interval for a journey to the shrines of Ise at Yamada—shrines that date from the year 4 B. C. The greatest of these is the Naiku Temple. It stands in a forest of giant trees where the devotion and prayers of these many centuries have gathered and create a marvelous peace. It still is the most flourishing and revered temple in Japan. At least once in his lifetime every true Japanese, man or woman, feels that he or she must make a pilgrimage to the shrines of Ise, for here is the Sacred Mirror that the adroit and resourceful goddess Ume-no-utsume made use of to draw from her cave the Sun-goddess Amaterasu, the divine ancestress of all Nippon. In the Shinto temples everywhere there is neither altar nor image but only the mirror-symbol which is believed to reveal to the worshipper his own soul.

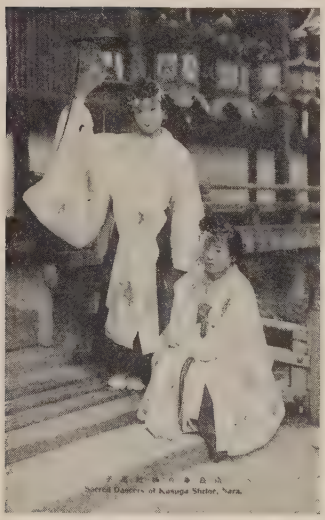
Adjoining the Naiku temple is a special dance pavilion upon

which priestesses perform the type of dancing called Kagura. Here and also at beautiful Nara, the first and most ancient capital city of Japan, I saw the Kagura dancers. The technical style of this Kagura dancing is not unlike the more restrained theatrical dancing of Japan, but is more formal and ritualistic and slower, though not so slow as the Noh dance which is the slowest of all the dancing of Japan. The slowness of Noh dancing is veritably hypnotic.

We saw both at Yamada and at Nara the little Shinto priestesses dancing the Kagura. They were probably not more than twelve or fourteen years of age, some times as many as thirty of them dancing at one time. The ritual dress is a pure white kimono with as many as eight under-kimonos—all white—laid in regular formal folds one over the other and visible at the neck only. Over these is worn a bright red long hakima—a kind of divided skirt—which comes down over the feet and trails out in two separate trains. They use as properties a form of sistrum, that is, a cone of bronze bells on a red-lacquered handle, and a very large fan from the end of which are long streamers of varicolored silk cords. They are accompanied by an older priestess on the Koto, that most elegant and aristocratic of Japanese instruments.

When the ritual dance at Yamada was finished, the little priestesses disappeared, and we left the temple. A light rain was falling. Presently we saw them, transformed into simple little shortfrocked school girls, holding bright colored rain umbrellas of waxed paper half open above their sleek dark heads. They came along the road under the giant trees and went away over a high-curved bridge that joined its bright reflection in the water below. The priests themselves are also dancers. We have seen them enact the Sun Goddess legend in Shinto religious dancing with elaborate and stately ceremonial movement.

To us, the strangest place of all to have seen religious dancing



Shinto priestesses dancing the "Kagura" at Nara

An open air performance of Bugaku at Tokio

was in a department store. We were guests of the Mitsukoshi Store, in Osaka and had to stop and marvel at every department as we were shown from roof to basement. We came upon a little theatre. Here was being performed a religious ceremonial dance by Shinto priests in full regalia actually before a shrine. They were dancing the whole story of the Amaterasu myth—the Sun Goddess who hid in a cave and was brought back to the world by the lure of the mirror.

Religious dancing is not confined to the Shinto cult; it goes on at Buddhist temples though not as a part of the ritual. With Buddhists it is done rather as an act of personal devotion on the part of pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Of the different types of present day religious dancing in Japan a valuable record is now being made by a native Japanese

scholar with moving picture apparatus. I saw these films at Meiji Park in Tokio where I was the guest of the maker of this precious document.

Our introduction to the Court dancing of Japan, the Bugaku, was through the kindness of Dr. Anesaki, Librarian of the Imperial University. With characteristic Japanese courtesy he secured for us the inestimable privilege, so rarely granted to foreigners that before us only Jascha Heifetz had been so honored, of visiting the Music Department of the Imperial Household. We crossed the castle moat, passed through the great gate set in massive walls into the very palace grounds. The Music Department has a separate building to itself. There we saw the ancient musical instruments and costumes of Bugaku, the most ancient form of dancing now existent in Japan. This type of dancing came from China at a very early period. It is told that at the coronation of the first Emperor, some 600 years B. C., it was performed for his edification. The Bugaku was shortly after its importation to Japan, crushed out of China by the Mongols and the Manchus and is preserved now only in Japan.

What we had heard about Bugaku had led us to expect something of museum interest, probably severe and dull. To our amazement the robes which were brought out and displayed to us were of varied and sumptuous magnificence. Nothing that Bakst ever dreamed of could rival the glory of color, but with it all there was a sanity and richness of detail, a dignity and proportion that is alien to the Russian temperament.

Two of these Bugaku dances are described in that very interesting book recently published in America, "The Tale of Genji," translated by Arthur Waley from the original Japanese of Lady Murasaki, who lived in 1000 A. D. We read that the prince Genji, called "The Shining One," danced the dance of the "Blue Waves" and also the "Karyobinga" (given by Mr. Waley as Kalovinka). The historic costumes in the design actually worn by Prince Genji were brought out for us to see. Moreover

Ancient masks used in the Bugaku dances

worthy dignitaries in charge of the Emperor's music dressed themselves for our pleasure in the marvelous brocades and headdresses, and fastened about their bodies the ancient lacquered swords.

Other members of the music department brought out the ancient instruments, which are never seen on the Japanese theatrical stage, but which are used twice a year exclusively in the Court when Bugaku is danced. Each dance lasts about forty minutes and upon each of these semi-annual occasions two dances are performed.

The most popular of the Bugaku dances is the "Kochi" or butterfly dance. It is performed by four boys of about fourteen years, who wear long brocaded mantles hanging from their shoulders and trailing out behind them for several yards. Over this, front and back, they wear a brilliantly colored papier-mache butterfly, highly conventionalized in form.

The most gorgeously costumed dance of all the court dances

is the one that represents warriors celebrating a victory after the establishment of peace. The helmets are of solid gold, brilliantly decorated with cloisonné, and with cut rock-crystal, inset like jewels. Over the costume of red and gold brocade is worn a suit of simulated armor in the old Japanese style, with epaulets of red and gold lacquered wood made in the shape of dragons' heads. There is a wooden bow carved like a fantastic fish, a quiver with six solid gold arrows, and long spears which lie on the ground, during the dance. The sheaths of the swords are made of lacquer and gold and are set with semi-precious jewels. It is the last word in splendor.

Several of the members of the music department played on the ancient instruments—a huge drum, on a standard fourteen feet high, three kinds of flutes, one of which resembled a small pipe organ, and many smaller drums and stringed instruments. One of the men also performed portions of the dance for us.

We were shown volume after volume of paintings done by great artists of the past, representing each of the many costumes in perfect detail, so that in addition to the seven or eight kinds of costumes we saw in reality, we were able to study from the paintings all of the other kinds of Bugaku. Upon our return to Japan we had the rare good fortune to be in Tokio at the time of one of the semi-annual performances of Bugaku and received invitations to attend this performance. A long lecture on the history of the Bugaku as developed in Japan was followed by two very interesting examples of the dance itself, each danced by four men. Because of our enthusiasm and the quality of our interest in the books of costume design, Mr. Yamamoto of the Imperial Theatre secured permission to have an artist go into the Music Department of the Imperial Household and make a copy of two entire volumes of the Bugaku costume designs. This laborious task was finished just before our return season at the Imperial Theatre and the paintings were bound in a rich brocade and presented to us. This is the only copy in existence of the originals in the Im-

Scene from a Noh dance

perial Household and we feel that these are such treasures that they should be shared in some manner, such as an art collection making a tour of the Universities. It is my hope that some day we shall be able to bring an adaptation of this gorgeous and wonderful style of dance to American audiences.

A third type of dance is the "Noh," which is to Japan what grand opera is to Europe, except that when the first grand opera was written the Noh was already 300 years old. Whereas in grand opera the themes are seldom religious or profound,—Wagner's "Parsifal" being the most significant exception—the themes of the Noh are nearly always mystic and intensely ethical. Codes of honor—loyalty and sacrifice—dominate the lives and ideals of the Japanese.

The word "Noh" is supposed to mean accomplishment. Its hold upon Japan can hardly be over-stated. Even to-day it is supported by all the aristocracy of Japan. By supported I do not mean merely financial support and attendance at performances.

It is believed in and understood. There are three hundred recognized authentic Noh dramas, at least one hundred of which are familiar to every educated Japanese. The Golden Age of the Noh was about 1363, since when very little has been added or changed. Therefore, the language is archaic in the extreme and is not easily understood by the present day Japanese except through sustained and devoted study.

The Noh theatre has an architecture all its own, widely different from the popular, or Kabuki, theatre. There is no front curtain, no lighting effects, no scenery. The stage is a square platform in one corner of the building; the audience sits on mats on the floor in Japanese style, thus facing the stage in two directions. Along one wall is a walk on the same level as the stage; by this the Noh dancers make their entrances and exits. On the back wall of the stage, on natural and beautifully grained wood, is painted a conventional pine tree. First the chorus and orchestra come on. The orchestra is made up of one drum, struck with sticks, two drums struck with the hands, and a flute. The chorus ranges from four to eight persons.

The Noh is performed more slowly than I ever dreamed human beings could move. There is a control of the body which permits of producing a movement so gradual that after one has watched for some time he has almost a nightmarish sensation, as of movement held back by invisible hands. The Noh performance begins in the early afternoon and continues for six hours, durin which time three Noh plays are performed. In the interval between these main features, two farces are introduced, called Kyogen. During the two Kyogen the members of the audience get up, walk out, or sit and talk to each other, turning their backs on the stage. But during the performance of the Noh there is silent, intense concentration. The spectators follow the play with script in hand and give rapt attention.

It was our privilege to be invited by the Hosho Guild to visit the warehouse where the costumes and properties for all their

plays are stored. Here we examined gorgeous kimonos five hundred years old, fans, belts, head-dresses, swords, drums and many other articles used in the Noh drama. It was explained to us that the Hosho Guild had wished to invite us to become members, an honor never before offered to foreigners. However, we were not eligible, for there is an agreement among all the Noh Guilds of Japan that no one who has ever appeared on the stage of a commercial theatre may be admitted to a Noh Guild.

A further influence of this exacting regulation on the part of the Noh Guilds touched the question of bringing the Noh plays to America and Europe, of which there has been some discussion. The idea was to bring at least one company of real Japanese Noh dancers with chorus and orchestra to America. Among many difficulties is chiefly the fact that they cannot appear in any theatre which has ever been used for commercial purposes. Furthermore, the whole architecture of the Noh theatre is very different from our own. The average audience, anywhere but in Japan, would be at first mystified, and then bored, and would probably walk out after the first half hour. Valuable as such a performance would be, it would be appreciated by only a limited group of cultured people, and by dance students who are genuinely interested in deepening their insight into this greatest art of the human race.

Chapter IV

DANCING IN CHINA

There could be no greater contrast than that of the virile dancing of Japan with the ageing, almost senile, dancing of China. An old Chinese proverb has it that "A King can best be judged by the condition of dancing during his reign."

If this be true, a picture of the political situation seen from the angle of research into the dancing of China to-day would show a nation declining, feeble, and close to its grave. Her life has been long. Of all existing nations China is the most ancient in the world. Other ancient great civilizations have either perished or become a subdued people, ruled by foreign powers. But the unbroken history of China dates back so far it is lost in prehistoric time.

In her vital and youthful periods China had a tremendous interest in dancing. She practiced it widely and held it in high regard. We have a definite date of 2698 B. C. when a cult of gymnastic dancing was formed and given the name Cong Fou. The purpose of Cong Fou was the healing of diseases. It was accepted throughout the entire Chinese Empire. Priest-physicians taught and applied its principles. To-day after more than 4,500 years of continuous practice Cong Fou is still accepted. So important was the procedure of Cong Fou considered that it was placed under governmental regulation.

M. Amiot, a French Catholic missionary in China, writes of this Cult as follows:

The priests (who are the physicians) enter into an extensive detail of the positions of the body in all their shades of varia-

tion. These are so numerous, that we do not fear to say that all the postures and attitudes of comedians, dancers, tumblers and artistic figures are but a small portion of those which have been introduced into this practice. The different modes of stretching, folding, raising, falling, bending, and extending, separating and approaching the arms and legs, in the standing, sitting and lying positions, form a prodigious variety.

The patrons and priests of the Cong Fou dance seem to have had in mind always the higher ends of existence, the good of the soul. They believed that through this system of dancing the soul could best be ministered to through the body, and thus the Chinese regarded the Cong Fou as a true exercise of religion which, by curing the body of its deformities, liberates the soul from the servitude of the senses and gives it power to accomplish its wishes on earth and of freely elevating itself to the perfection and perpetuity of its spiritual end under the Tao, the realm of the great creative power.

The high water mark of dancing in the Chinese court was reached about a thousand years ago. The books and pictures dealing with that period indicate that it had not been developed beyond a series of graceful and delicate postures. However, from that high point dancing continuously declined until at the beginning of this century it had gone so far as to be almost non-existent. The modern descendants of the Cong Fou system, it is true, have an athletic association which has a great following and exercises considerable power in Chinese native life.

My own experience with this interesting system was through one of its finest exponents, a professor of Cong Fou. He gave an exhibition which was arranged for us privately, of what is termed "boxing." Mr. Liu, the professor, was a man about fifty years of age, slightly bald, very thin, and with the general manner of an old-time deacon. His clothes were shabby, hardly better than those of a coolie.

In a brief preliminary speech (which was translated for us)

he described four classes of movements. The first three seemed to parallel the Delsartian mental, spiritual-emotional and physical divisions; the fourth was the imitative. Then came the actual performance. It was a revelation. His every movement was beautiful,—truly the expression of an artist consciousness.

Mr. Liu explained that although the word which foreigners used was "boxing," to his mind the system of movement could better be described as dancing, especially as in the training periods it was a solo performance and not done with an opponent. During his first three divisions he included physical feats of the most extraordinary acrobatic difficulty, but done with such superlative ease, that they seemed to be like beads on a string of continuous flowing, unbroken movement. He did double somersaults in the air, landing on the back of his neck and continuing on up into a standing position. He jumped in mid-air and, crossing his legs tailor fashion, came down from mid-air in that position, rebounding with an upward spiral turn. His middle movement was much in the style of what we call plastiques. There was manifested at all times a continuous flow of movement through the body, combined with perfect balance in the most extraordinary and difficult postures.

For his fourth movement, the imitative type, he chose to imitate a monkey! We watched it, entranced by the agility, the verisimilitude and delicious artistic humor of this monkey dance. The whole performance was presented without musical accompaniment but with perfectly satisfying effect. We saw in it a further proof of Miss St. Denis' assertion that the dance is an independent art, complete in itself.

In the Chinese theatre dancing is almost non-existent and the search for it was most difficult. In Japan the artists of the theatre and our various Japanese friends made it easy for us to see the wonderful dancing which abounds there but in China there is by no means the rapport between the better quality of native Chinese and foreigners that exists in Japan.

Mei Lan-Fang the greatest actor-dancer of China
in four of his favorite rôles

Through Mary Ferguson, head of the Peking Society of Fine Arts and herself an authority on things Chinese, we finally achieved contact with the finest exponent of theatrical art in China, Mr. Mei Lan-Fang.

Getting to Peking was not an easy matter in itself. The annual Chinese war was going on, with Peking as the bone of contention over which three enormous armies were fighting. The railroad between Tientsin and Peking was likely to be cut off at any moment while the railroad between Peking and Shanghai had been disabled for several weeks already. Mr. Mei, because of the unsettled conditions, was not appearing personally in public, but through Miss Ferguson we were able to arrange a private performance by him and his company.

Mei Lan-Fang is the only hope of a real renaissance of the dance art in China. Although but thirty-two years of age he has genius and powerful personality which have been felt throughout the entire Chinese Empire. The day after the special performance I had a three-hour interview with him through a most sympathetic and intelligent interpreter and learned the following:

The theatre as Mei Lan-Fang found it had almost died of dry rot. The drama was conventionalized to the last degree, becoming through centuries more and more divorced from real life and gradually losing its hold upon the public until its following was only from among the lower classes. Mr. Mei viewed the various foreign performances in the theatres of Shanghai and realized that the drama and dance of the American and European people were more vital and more true to life. Very wisely, however, he did not attempt to copy foreign types of dancing, but went back into Chinese history to that period a thousand years ago when dancing was at its height. Thence by arduous study of books, pictures, manuscripts and music, he made a recreated dance which was truly Chinese danc-

ing at its best. The theatrical costumes had grown so stiff with gold brocade and tinsel that the movements of the body were almost completely concealed, so he revived the use of soft and clinging silks to reveal the body line.

We had become accustomed in Japan to female roles played by men; in China it is so also. Mr. Mei plays female roles exclusively. That however is a condition which has been accepted in all Oriental countries for centuries. Men and women are kept on separate stages. There are a few theatres where women play all the parts of both men and women but in the main the actors of the Chinese theatre are entirely male, who play both male and female parts.

Mr. Mei, in private life, while slender and sensitive, is not in the slightest degree effeminate. As we drove up to his house an amah was standing in the courtyard with a robust and attractive Chinese infant in her arms. Our Chinese friend who was with us in the car remarked, "that is Mei Lan-Fang's third wife's second baby!"

When Mei Lan-Fang is engaged for a season he receives a sum of 30,000 taels—about $20,000 in American gold a month. Consequently he lives like a prince in grand style, with an outer barrier of managers and secretaries which is almost unsurmountable.

Mei Lan-Fang has in several ways put his reforming touch upon Chinese drama. For instance there were such restrictions as this: an actor playing a woman's part was not supposed to make any gestures with her hands whatsoever, but had to keep them crossed in front of her during her entire time on the stage. She wore sleeves which were fastened tightly at the wrists and very often long inner sleeves which came down over and hid her hands completely. Mr. Mei changed this, using loose sleeves which fell back and displayed the bare arms as far up as the elbow, and then developed a system of hand and

arm movements graceful and fascinating to a degree. He has without any question a pair of beautiful hands and uses them more exquisitely perhaps than any other man in the world.

He has pioneered, too, in another way, in that he has brought the action of the drama up to a certain point and then interpolated an actual dance; that is to say, movements to music accompanied by his own singing voice, during which the narrative or plot is held in abeyance. This was something which did not exist in the theatre at the time of his coming. Naturally he stirred up a great deal of criticism and opposition among the fundamentalists of the Chinese theatre, which was to be expected in a nation where ancestor worship is strong. It is, therefore, the greatest possible tribute to his genius that he now has all of China at his feet and has so affected the theatre that one cannot find an actor playing a female part without seeing practically an imitation of Mei Lan-Fang.

I asked him if his innovations were largely of a personal and individual nature, or if they were based upon definite principles and could be formed into a teachable system. He replied that the latter was true and that he had a great many pupils, among whom were numbered the most prominent young actors of the Chinese stage. This was corroborated through other sources; it seems that to study with Mei Lan-Fang constitutes a graduate course of the Chinese stage.

The dance which he did particularly for us was from a drama called "Hsiang Yu's Farewell To His Wife." The story, very briefly is that of a general who is so beleagured by opposing forces that he knows the next day's battle will prove fatal. He returns to his home and tells the state of affairs to his beautiful young wife (played by Mei Lan-Fang). She thereupon takes a sword and executes a dance designed to amuse him in his last hours, but finally, overcome with grief at the thought of life without him, she ends the dance by committing suicide.

In this dance the first movement was done with an enormous

Ruth St. Denis in a costume given her by Mei Lan-Fang

Ted Shawn garbed as a Chinese theatre general

Ann Douglas—a Denishawn Dancer—in a Shanghai garden

Mei Lan-Fang with Miss St. Denis and Mr. Shawn, Pavilion Theatre, Peking

circular cape, and consisted largely of postures with the cape and soft graceful movements of the hands. After the cape was removed two swords came out of the sheath, trick swords in that they appeared to be one sword at first glance, but at a certain movement in the dance suddenly became two. As the dance grew livelier the foot work became evident for the first time. The actual steps were simple and limited in variety, not exceeding a few rapid turns executed with both feet on the ground and once or twice a movement that was similar to an inhibited *jeté tour*. Toward the end of the dance the use of the two swords became very intricate and as the swords were polished silver he achieved an effect of a network of flashing light surrounding his entire body. The power and charm, however, seem to reside mainly in his own personality, for later, when we saw other young actors attempt the same style, we realized even more the vitalizing power which Mei Lan-Fang possesses.

In a small and tawdry theatre in Shanghai we saw a dance which seemed to have been derived from the athletic dancing of Cong Fou but had been grafted on to theatrical ideas. One young actor, taking the part of a warrior princess, defended himself in battle with a long spear, achieving an astounding agility and graceful performance in an imitation of the Chinese women's bound feet. Opponents, running in and out, attacked him from all sides and were deftly repelled, all sword thrusts being parried by the long spear. Several soldiers attacked with two swords, others with one, and still others with spears. After each opponent had been dispatched his death agony took the form of a double somersault in mid-air, landing in the exit and rolling out of sight. At times a Chinese general and his entire army seemed to sweep on to the stage to take part in the free-for-all, the warrior princess always emerging triumphant.

The whole performance was done to a clanging of gongs, screeching of cat-gut and playing of ear-piercing flutes, and was executed with such amazing rapidity that one was left with

Chinese actors in a warrior dance

a feeling of nightmare. The whole thing was definitely rhythmic, extremely deft and showed the result of careful training. Poor as its setting was it deserves mention under the heading of Chinese dance art.

Of social dancing in China there is absolutely none, nor has there ever been. The women of China are more secluded than those of other Oriental nations. For thousands of years their feet have been cruelly bound, which further prevented any advance into the world which they might have been tempted to make. When one Chinese gentleman calls upon another he inquires in a most abstract way for the entire family of his host, but at no time in his life will he ever see one single female member of his friend's household, there being no occasion in the entire round of Chinese life where men and women may meet socially. It is quite obvious, therefore, that social dancing could never even have a chance to be born.

In the ancient days, as in all nations, dancing was the chief means of a religious expression, and it still exists in the Confucious temples of China. Two important dance rituals are held each year, six months apart at the hour of midnight. This

dancing, in visible character, is much the same style as the graceful posturing of Mei Lan-Fang.

In Shanghai, we met the Princess Der Ling who had been lady-in-waiting to the Empress Dowager. Through the Princess we learned that the Empress Dowager had had a tremendous interest in the dance, and that a great deal of time was given in her court to revivifying the ancient court dances, also that some very beautiful dance performances were held at her court. She also described the type of dancing as being similar to the performances of Mei Lan-Fang.

Another aspect of the dance potentiality of China came to our attention in Shanghai, where we were entertained by the Y. W. C. A. We met many young Chinese girls who have had modern educations, most of them having studied in America and in England. The present generation is almost entirely freed from bound feet, which is now being practiced only in the remote inner provinces. On the streets we had seen thousands of women with bound feet, women of forty or fifty years of age. These girls, therefore, represent the first generation that has had a fair chance to approach the dance with the physical equipment so necessary—that of healthy and undeformed feet.

There is a play of Russian influence on China through the presence of many refugees. The Russian population is so great, in fact, that there are four daily newspapers printed in Russian. Fortunately the younger generation of China has no taste for ballet, herein showing a much greater acumen than some of their Japanese cousins. Toe dancing is alien to the Chinese. It is so recently that they have escaped the torture of bound feet that they have no taste for the ballet toe slipper.

As to native talent, Mei Lan-Fang remains the single and isolated example of artist-dancer in China. It is as though an old and mighty oak tree had died at the top, but coming up from the roots, there is one slender, delicate new shoot. There

is still life and vitality in China; out of this period of decay and weakness and disintegration there may yet come another great period of national unity and power. At present, in spite of the undeniable greatness of Mei Lan-Fang, both as a person and as an artist, the dance art of China is no more than this slender shoot coming up from a vast dead trunk.

Chapter V

DANCING IN THE MALAY PENINSULA

If New York is the melting pot of the Occident, then Singapore is surely the melting pot of the Orient.

The first impression and the strongest one, is of diverse and multitudinous races of people who flow before one's eyes in this city of the Malay Peninsula—Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Burmese, Siamese, East Indians of various tribes, Sinhalese, all wearing their native costumes and making a pageant of color on the streets of Singapore, and in numbers of population almost completely submerging the actual native Malay. The Malays, themselves, are a very little known people. Even the scientists give us no very satisfactory history of the race, and yet, the Malay race has spread over a wider area than any other Eastern people. Whether the long strip of land proceeding southward from Burma and Siam, which we call the Malay Peninsula, was the centre and source of this racial spread, we do not know, but it is generally accepted to-day as being the stronghold of the Malay people.

The Malay seem to show strong influences from all surrounding races. The general contour of his face is more Chinese than otherwise; the short, squat, stocky body he possesses in common with the Burmese and Siamese; his clothes and the clothes of the women, while distinctive in the ensemble, seem to have derived each separate garment from a different country. The "sarong," or wrapped skirt, is exactly like that of the Javanese to the South; their hair dressing styles and little short jackets show definite Burmese influences; and the art of wear-

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn performing a Malay dance in the palace of the Sultan of Johore

ing the head-sheet is most distinctively East Indian. It is not surprising then that in the Malay dancing we find a corresponding intermingling of styles.

The dancing of the Malays, as of all primitive peoples, had a religious origin, and on rare occasions there can still be seen the ritualistic dances in which there is burning of incense, scattering of rice and in which invocations to the dance spirit are made according to set forms. But in the main the dancing of the Malays to-day has, chiefly, a sex significance.

A private performance with the best native dancers was arranged for us in Singapore and a native orchestra engaged. There were two women and two men dancers while the orchestra consisted of five musicians, playing various kinds of drums, a gong and a stringed instrument of the violin type. The women were in the holiday attire worn by all Malay women, the most distinctive feature of their dress being the manner of wearing the hair, which is drawn into a huge knot at the back of the head. This knot is surrounded by a wreath made of tiny jasmine buds or other small flowers and then the knot is pierced by a series of gold pins with huge knobs lined up on one side of the knot, the projecting points making the design on the other side.

The dance was, in form, what we call a square or contra dance. Like nearly all dances of the Orient, it was slow and monotonous, very scant in variety and with endless repetitions. The dancers sang quatrains to each other, which our host, who understood the Malay language, told us were quite untranslatable in mixed society. However, as we could not understand the words we were not offended. The voices have that high-pitched and yet strong, almost strident character, with an undercurrent of longing, which called to my mind the Flamenco songs of Southern Spain. In the first dance, which was done by the two girls, with a shuffling step, the heels of the loose slippers on their feet flopping and clicking on the floor, I was sud-

denly reminded of the "Ouled Nail" dancers of the Sahara desert. In the second dance, which was practically the same in body and foot movements, but to which a scarf was added, there was a discernible Japanese influence. After some time the dancers became a little more lively, a few rapid turns were interpolated, and the postures became a little more varied, introducing a knee-bending backward curtsy.

The dances thus performed for European visitors are, we could plainly see, very much tempered and subdued. Friends of ours in Singapore, who have lived there many years and who have been invited to native celebrations at the palace of the Sultan of Johore, told of the native dances which last all night long, growing wilder and faster, while the drum and gong beats become louder and more insistent as the night wears on and the dancers become gradually more and more inflamed. The spectacle must then become truly compelling.

In Pahang, one of the Malay states, the ruler keeps a trained ballet to perform what is called the "joget," a dance with definite art form, with an accompaniment of something like *real* music. Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham, who was for many years British Governor of the Federated Malay States, in his book, "Malay Sketches," describes his attendance upon a private performance of this kind in Pahang, about forty years ago at a time when the Malay was completely untouched by European influences. After spending a day in the Raffles Museum and Library in Singapore, where there is one of the largest collections of books on the subject of Malay people, I found no description of the Malay dancing to equal the one I shall quote from Sir Frank's "Malay Sketches."

I had gone to Pahang on a political mission accompanied by a friend, and we were vainly courting sleep in a miserable lodging when a message came from the Sultan inviting us to witness a "joget" at 1 A. M. When we entered we saw, seated on the carpet, four girls, all attractive according to Malay ideas

of beauty, and all gorgeously and picturesquely clothed. On their heads they each wore a large and curious, but very pretty, ornament of delicate workmanship, a sort of square flower garden where all the flowers were gold, trembling and glittering with every movement of the wearer. These ornaments were secured to the head by twisted cords of silver and gold.

The girls' hair, combed down in a fringe, was cut in a perfect oval round their foreheads and very becomingly dressed behind. The bodies of their dresses were made of tight-fitting silk, leaving neck and arms bare, whilst a white band of fine cambric (about 1½ inches wide) passing round the neck, came down on the front of the bodice in the form of a V, and was there fastened by a golden flower.

Round their waists were belts fastened with large and curiously worked buckles of gold, so large that they reached quite across the waist. The rest of the costume consisted of a skirt of cloth (not at all like the sarong), reaching to the ankles, while a scarf of the same material, fastened in its centre to the waist-buckle, hung down to the hem of the skirt.

On their arms the dancers wore a number of gold bangles, and their fingers were covered with diamond rings. In their ears were fastened the diamond buttons so much affected by Malays, and indeed now by Western ladies. Their feet, of course, were bare, and they sat in the usual Eastern fashion (the attitude is that obtained by transferring the body directly from a kneeling to a sitting position) on the carpet, bending forward, their elbows resting on their thighs, and hiding the sides of their faces, which were towards the audience, with fans made of crimson and gilt paper which sparkled in the light.

On our entrance the band struck up, and our special attention was called to the orchestra, as the instruments are seldom seen in the Malay Peninsula.

There were two chief performers, one playing on a sort of harmonicon, the notes of which he struck with pieces of stick held in each hand. The other, with similar pieces of wood, played on inverted metal bowls. Both these performers seemed to have sufficiently hard work, but they played with the greatest spirit from 10 P. M. till 5 A. M.

The harmonicon is called by Malays "chelempong" and the

Malay men in Singapore in a native dance

Dayak warriors in a dance of mimic combat

A Dayak war-dancer in full regalia

inverted bowls which give a pleasant and musical sound like the noise of rippling water, a "gambang". The other members of the orchestra consisted of a very small boy who played with a very large and thick stick, on a gigantic gong, and an old woman who beat a drum with two sticks, and several other boys who played on instruments like triangles called "chanang."

All these performers, we were told with much solemnity, were artists of the first order, masters and a mistress in their craft, and if vigor and execution count for excellence they proved the justice of the praise beyond the shadow of a doubt.

From the elaborate and vehement execution of the players, the want of regular time in the music, I judged, and rightly, that we had entered as the overture began. During its performance the dancers sat leaning forward, hiding their faces as I have described; but when it concluded and, without any break, the music changed into the regular rhythm for dancing, the four girls dropped their fans, raised their hands in the act of "sembah" or homage, and then began the dance by swaying their bodies and slowly waving their arms and hands in the most graceful movements, making much and effective use all the while of the scarf hanging from their belts.

Gradually raising themselves from a sitting to a kneeling posture, acting in perfect accord in every motion, then rising to their feet, they floated through a series of figures hardly to be exceeded in grace and difficulty, considering that the movements are essentially slow, the arms, hands and body being the real performers, whilst the feet were scarcely noticed and for half the time not visible.

They danced five or six dances, each lasting quite half an hour, with materially different figures and time in the music. All these dances, I was told, were symbolical; one, of agriculture, with the tilling of the soil, the sowing of the seed, the reaping and winnowing of the grain, might easily have been guessed from the dancer's movements. But those of the audience whom I was near enough to question were, Malay-like, unable to give me much information. Attendants stood or sat near the dancers and from time to time, as the girls tossed one thing on the floor, handed them another. Sometimes it was a fan or a mirror they held, sometimes a flower or small vessel,

but oftener their hands were empty, as it is in the management of the fingers that the chief art of Malay dancing consists.

The last dance, symbolical of war, was perhaps the best, the music being much faster, almost inspiring, and the movements of the dancers more free and even abandoned. For the later half of the dance, they each held a wand, to represent a sword, bound with three rings of burnished gold which glittered in the light like precious stones.

The nautch, which began soberly, like the others, grew to a wild revel until the dancers were, or pretended to be, possessed by the Spirit of Dancing, "hantu menari," as they call it, and leaving the hall for a moment to smear their fingers and faces with a fragrant oil, they returned, and the two eldest, striking at each other with their wands seemed inclined to turn the symbolical into a real battle. They were, however, after some trouble, caught by four or five women and carried forcibly out of the hall, but not until their captors had been made to feel the weight of the magic wands. The two younger girls, who looked as though they too would like to be possessed, but did not know how to accomplish it, were easily caught and removed.

The band, whose strains had been increasing in wildness and in time, ceased playing on the removal of the dancers, and the nautch, which had begun at 10 P. M. was over.

The Rajah, who had only appeared at 4 A. M. told me that one of the elder girls, when she had become properly possessed by the Spirit of Dancing, lived for months on nothing but flowers, a pretty and poetic conceit.

Performances of this kind were very difficult to see as far back as forty years ago and now are practically impossible. The influence of the English, in such tremenduous numbers, has brought about a considerable change in native manners, dress and customs. Except in the far interior cities, which are less touched by the so-called civilization of the white people, the ideal is to copy the Englishman in all he does. Recently the Sultan of Johore gave a birthday party which lasted a week and to which the notables of Singapore society were invited.

The entertainment provided was totally devoid of any native Malay touch. The Sultan had an American jazz band, horse racing, banquets of European food served in most voluptuous manner and, as a final touch, the ladies played bridge and Mah Jong.

W. W. Skeat, who had made, next to Sir Frank Swettenham, the most intensive study into the art and thought of the Malay, tells in his book, "Malay Magic," of many dances of religious and ritualistic purpose which he has witnessed in the interior. He speaks of a dance called the "gamber," a ritual-dance, performed by a very young girl upon the occasion of her entering into womanhood. This dance seems to have been in vogue for many centuries, and developed a tradition which made the details of its ritual most rigidly adhered to. It seems to have been an impressive and idyllic performance.

Another, which he calls the Monkey Dance, has a more sinister side. Children ten years old are made to whirl rapidly to music, during which time some sort of hypnotic influence is brought to bear upon them. After they become almost epileptic with whirling, they are told that they are monkeys. Instantly they spring to great heights, swing from branches of trees and go through physical feats far beyond their ordinary powers, and of which they have no memory when they are brought to their senses.

Other strange styles of dancing, if they can be called such, which the Malays used in their religious and magic practices, were the Palm Blossom dances, and the Fish-Trap dances. In these, the objects, themselves, are dressed up in clothes, and after much drum playing and incantations, in some mysterious and inexplicable manner the long stalk of palm blossoms, or the fish-trap, whichever it happens to be, begins to dance of its own accord in the middle of the floor without any one near it, or any thread or lever to produce the movement.

Malay weddings are beautiful and elaborate affairs and last

sometimes for a week or more. For each day there are ritualistic observances which are stated in the minutest detail and obeyed implicitly. Each day the fingers of the bride and groom are stained with henna by the bridesmaids or attendants and the henna staining is accompanied by a beautiful dance. No wedding, however poor, is complete without this festival Henna Dance taking place each day of the week's observances. Skeat also speaks of medicine men who dance around the body of a patient in order to cure diseases. This is a dance motif common among all primitive peoples.

The indigenous Malay religion was one of primitive magic and animism, but some hundreds of years ago the on-sweeping horde of Mohammedans made a religious conquest of the Malay peoples and to-day the faith of Islam is the official Malay religion. Quite evidently from this Arab source came another dance called "Main Dabus" in which iron spits are driven into the body of a religious fanatic and he dances wildly with these implements still in him. This is identical with dances which I have witnessed in North Africa, performed by the Aissoua, and, which I shall describe in a later chapter.

There are on the Malay Peninsula many tribes of people who are supposedly aboriginal peoples such as the tribes of Semang, the Jakun and Sakai. These are genuine savages. They wear only a girdle of straw. They mutilate their bodies with scars and decorative designs and put enormous blocks of iron or metal into their ears and lips and through the cartilages of the nose. These people have the usual dances of savage peoples; mimetic animal dances are performed by the men, sword and dagger dances which are of a war-like character. One special dance which is very interesting is a dance held in honor of the spirit of a dead tiger. Even though they bow to the necessity of killing a tiger, they worship him as a great spirit and placate this spirit by a sincere and reverent dance ceremony around his freshly killed corpse.

In Singapore and Penang, it is easier to study foreign influences than Malay ones. The Malay himself, is not easily accessible. In Singapore there are several high-class Chinese theatres where the usual Chinese dancing goes on; along the river which flows through the city temporary theatres are erected on high bamboo poles, so that the stage of the theatre is about eight feet above the level of the street. Performances in these are given by strolling troupes of Chinese players and dancers, many of which I witnessed amidst a throng of naked brown bodies. There are also two amusement parks in Singapore; one called "The Happy Valley" and the other "The New World," at which a "wayang," a native Malay performance, loosely called opera, and dances of the type which I first described can be seen at different times.

We were taken to another Malay "opera." The story was an East Indian story and the Malay dancers were attempting to perform Hindustani dances. It could hardly be called either representative or successful.

As a whole Malay dancing is a very primitive and uninspiring type. It may provide, however, a fragile base upon which an artist dancer could build a superstructure of real dancing, provided the theme was not too heavy and the intent not more than decoration.

Chapter VI

DANCERS OF BURMA

A land of joy! A land of color! A land of dancing! Burma has been called the country of peacocks and pagodas, of pongyis and pariah dogs, but to me it is a land of happiness and well being of the people. Everybody, even the poor, wear silk garments of vivid hues and all attend the frequent festivals called "Pwes," which are chiefly dancing, here and there relieved by spoken dialogue and song.

After the serious dignity of the Japanese dancing, the devitalized Chinese dancing, and the primitive monotony of the Malay, the dancing of Burma is almost a violent surprise, and certainly a delightful one. My preconceived notions of Burmese dancing were based on pictures I had seen for years of dancers whose tightly wrapped skirts, trailing on the ground suggested to me a type of dancing highly statuesque.

On the evening of our arrival in Rangoon, after four and a half days on the water from Singapore, we saw our first Pwe. The main dancer, a woman, was already in action and so complete was my astonishment that I could hardly take my eyes off the performer long enough to find my seat. Instead of the slow posturing that I had expected, this young girl was executing a series of steps which seemed to be at first sight a mixture of Russian Cossack, the Charleston and Siamese arm and hand movements. The rhythm was rapid and insistent; there was great variety of steps and an increased rapidity of finale movements. Each section of the dance ended with a posture of acrobatic difficulty, which came so abruptly as to give an unprepared onlooker an overwhelming surprise.

Some eight or a dozen Pwes that we saw during our stay in Rangoon showed an almost identical organization. The orchestra is unique, always composed of the following instruments:—in the very center a black and gold cradle-shaped affair, across the top of which is hung a series of boards which when played upon give very much the effect of a xylophone. This is called "pattala." To the right a man sits inside of a circular railing, some five feet in diameter, to which is laced a rope following the circle of the railing and in which are set many gongs—fifteen to thirty, each with a different note or tune. To the left of the "pattala" is a collection of thirteen drums, ranging in size and tone, which are also placed circularly around the drummer. The tuning is done by placing a sort of putty made of rice paste on the drum-head, and during the performance constant fingering keeps the drums up to the pitch of the "pattala." To his right rear is a man who plays on two kinds of flutes, one of which gives a sweet, soft tone, but the small one, about eight inches long, has an ear-piercing quality. Behind the "pattala" to the left is a man who corresponds to our trap drummer in that he has many instruments to play including another big drum, a hollow bamboo wooden block, several kinds of small gongs and bells, and even a whistle like our police whistle, which in moments of finale produces a great effect of excitement. These five players constitute an average orchestra.

The performers are generally two girl dancers and two clowns, called by the Burmese "loobyets." The loobyets open the performance by greeting the audience, improvising a dialogue describing the occasion for which the Pwe is given, such as a birthday, the initiation of a young man into the Buddhist monastery, or the annual celebration of some club; then they mention any distinguished people who are in the audience and urge the dancers to do their best in order to please the great ones who are to witness the performance. The lesser of the two

A Burmese dancer snapped on the roof of our hotel

A Burmese dancer with her "whackin' white cheroot"

The Princess in a Zat Pwe

Po Sein in a Zat Pwe

dancers then comes forward and kneeling, makes the Burmese salutation—a bow in four directions with the palms of the hands together and touching the head to the floor.

The typical costuming of the girl dancers is worthy of description. The first thing which strikes our eyes is the dancer's style of hair dressing. The Burmese all have long and luxuriant black tresses; even the men wear long hair tied in a knot upon their heads. The girls achieve a colossal mound of hair well to the front so that in profile the line of the brow is continued by the line of the knot, some four or five inches high. The hair is so dressed with cocoanut oil that it looks like black lacquer and is pinned in place with diamond or brilliant pins. Moreover it is variously decorated by clusters of flowers hanging from one side, little tinsel wreaths surrounding the base of the knot and a tassel of the hair itself hanging from inside of the knot to one side. Some of the dancers have below this knot a bobbed hair effect which, however, falls behind the ears, leaving the ears exposed. Some, using the old style, still dress the hair up from the neck.

The costume itself consists of a wrapped skirt which is called a "tamein." The tamein is simply a square of cloth folded around the body and tucked in so that the opening is down the front slightly to one side. The upper part of the skirt around the hips is always black, the middle part of the skirt is of various bright colors and often embroidered in solid silver thread, which at a distance looks like rhinestones, and the lower part of the dress is generally paler than the main color and fades out into almost pure white at the bottom which trails on the ground anywhere from a foot to eighteen inches. In private life the ladies walk so that the tightness of the wrapping is all that is needed to keep the skirt in place, but because of the activity of the dancer the skirt has to be fastened. Some dancers sew the skirts down the front, but in the main the American

safety pin is brought into play and becomes almost decorative in its design down the front of the skirt.

The upper part is a little jacket made of lawn or lace which is fitted so tightly that the dancer seems to be about to burst out of it. The Burmese woman's idea of modesty is so to bind her breasts that they seem almost non-existent. The jacket is very short and is stiffened with a rattan reed in the bottom so that the four little points make a decorative design. The dancer wears six or seven gold bracelets on each wrist over the long tight-fitting sleeves of the jacket. Across her bosom she has several rows of silver or beaded fringe, around her neck a tight string of pearls and hanging down from the neck are sometimes from three to a dozen long strings of bright beads. The dancer always has a small scarf of some contrasting color to the costume. A typical color scheme is a vivid pink skirt embroidered in silver, white lace jacket, with a yellow vest and an apple green scarf.

The loobyets wear the men's gala dress, which is called "Paso." This is also a wrapped skirt but has such a large amount of surplus that it is folded and tucked into the front and is sometimes thrown around the waist up the back and over the shoulder. The men's garments are of the most brilliant colors. Burmese silk is of a very superior quality and lends itself admirably to the art of costuming. The Burmese changeable silks are especially beautiful. The men wear a small thin silk handkerchief tied tightly around their heads with the ends showing in a fan shaped design or hanging down to the shoulder. Their jackets are very similar to the women's except that they are never wired out into the points, but hang straight instead.

We had the good fortune to find in Rangoon one of our friends, an American girl who had married a Burmese man. Her husband, Maung Paw Tun, is the president of the Legis-

lative Council of Burma, which is practically the Parliament. With Mg. Paw Tun we saw many Pwes, often at private parties and always where we were the only foreigners present. One was the annual celebration of a Burmese literary club, one was the birthday party of a friend, another one was given at the house of Po-Sein the greatest actor-dancer of Burma, who is a personal friend of Mg. Paw Tun. Another one was a strange, weird, poverty-stricken Pwe, given on the outskirts of the city, beginning after midnight and lasting until dawn, accompanied by gambling and peddling of strange looking food and drink.

Through other friends in British officialdom other Pwes were arranged for us, including one given by a very wealthy Chinese Club, and an all-day Pwe in the Palace of a Mohammedan "Prince." In order to get photographic records of the movements and postures we ourselves engaged the best dancer of the Pwes to give a performance on the roof of our hotel in the bright sunlight so that we could make both moving and still pictures of the dancing.

From the standpoint of a Westerner, there is no type of dancing in the Orient comparable to the Burmese dancing in charm and popular appeal. If an enterprising Broadway manager could bring a small troupe of these Burmese dancers into a revue in New York it would be the success of the season for their dancing has a surface vitality, a gay, joyous, rhythmic quality and the girls have an appealing charm. The whole is exotic but not alien, not antagonistic or incomprehensible. In some strange manner their dancing, which has an unbroken history of over eight or nine hundred years, has such similarity at times to American jazz that at first I could hardly believe it had not been influenced by our dancing. The Burmese popular dancing has every element which appeals to our theatre-going public. It is filled with difficult acrobatic stunts; it has a regular and attractive rhythm; it works up to a smashing climax; it has endless variety; and the dancers themselves have

The two dancers at Hadji's palace in a duet dance

Po Sein—Burma's greatest dancer

Ruth St. Denis and Ted Shawn in Burmese costume on the Royal Lakes, Rangoon

great personal charm. Another point favorable to popularity is that no dance is continued long enough to bore any one. The routine is relieved by dialogue of a humorous nature between the loobyets or between one loobyet and the dancer. This dialogue is a salacious type of humor, the Burmese idea of a joke being rawest of the raw.

One night after a charming little dancer had completed an especially fascinating movement, a man in the audience beckoned to one of the loobyets, who climbed down off the platform, took a ten rupee note and returned, giving it to the dancer. She asked to have the man who gave it pointed out to her. The donor of the ten rupee note yelled across the crowd "What am I going to get for it?" and she instantly replied "Only a receipt," and then the dance went on.

After a few moments of dialogue the dancer breaks into song which has a kind of gamin charm. She sings in a rather hoarse voice, with a strange attractive toughness, and suddenly the orchestra begins to speed up and she explodes into a display of extraordinary technique. One of the commonest types of movements is that of squatting and extending of alternate feet in a way we have associated exclusively with Russian peasant dancing. It is done with more variation, however, than I have seen the Russian achieve. In one evening one Burmese dancer displays an extremely large vocabulary of acrobatic dance steps, the only limitation, however, being that the tight skirts prevent leg movement from the hip, that is to say, no opening of the legs such as in a ballet leap or tour jeté and no high kicks. Nevertheless there are extraordinary feats, achieved under a handicap like a country fair sack race and which give the American spectator a feeling of wonder, and humor that, in spite of the gaiety verges toward awe.

Because of my surprise at the vigor and variety of the foot work, I have neglected to speak of the arms and hands. They

are extraordinary to say the least. The hands, fingers, hips and shoulders are twisted about as though they were circular-jointed. The suppleness of the hands is beyond belief. The dancers start as little children bending the hands back until a really talented actor can almost unaided touch her finger tips backward to her wrist, and sometimes a ripple will pass through the hands and fingers like wind on water. There is a constant use of opposition in the arms, it being the exception rather than the rule that both hands are doing the same thing at the same time.

Most of the dancing is done without any property. However, several times we saw an extraordinarily clever use of parasols, one girl keeping two parasols spinning rapidly throughout a dance which had the same physical vigor and technical variety as any of the preceding ones. Her finale consisted of jumping on a box which was thirty by forty inches in area, and with the umbrellas still spinning she bent backward and touched her toes with her nose. Other dancers occasionally use a fan and sometimes carry a handkerchief or chamois skin. The scarf which is always a part of the dancer's costume is sometimes brought into play although I have the feeling that the possibilities of the scarf were not fully developed. After a few movements it is generally tied tightly around the waist just above the points of the jacket and left there.

Toward the end of one Pwe the first dancer, who is the lesser of the two returned wearing a man's paso, and taking the part of a man danced several duets with the premier danseuse—a dance of obvious romantic theme, ending with a back bend on the part of the girl, a kiss by the boy, and a recovery into a posture of shyness. At another Pwe, after the leading girl dancer had danced for some two hours with no rest except what she accomplished during the dialogue and singing, she was relieved by a third loobyet who did a dance which I was told was

supposed to be comic. Again I had mingled feelings; the dance was humorous, but it was technically so well done that my emotion was more of admiration than amusement.

The style of the men's dancing, as far as the actual steps, is almost identical with the girls'. It is only in the extreme vigor and masculinity of gestures that the man proclaims his masculinity. When the man dancer begins to work up into acrobatic stunts he passes the end of the paso between his legs, pulls it up tightly and wraps it around the waist, reducing his skirt to a pair of short bagging trousers. Thus he has the freedom for his extraordinary movements. Since the girl has not this privilege, her achievements are the more remarkable because of the constant handicap of the skirt which is wrapped tightly clear down to the feet.

At some time during each Pwe a slower dance was performed. This one is entirely a matter of posturing, there being none of the jumping, squatting and rapid whirling of the other dances. It is called "Yodia" and is supposed to be of Siamese derivation. Some hundreds of years ago when the Burmese conquered a part of Siam this dance is supposed to have been introduced into Burma. It is fascinating to watch, especially as it comes with refreshing contrast to a long series of dances of such extreme energy. In this the almost distorted use of arms and hands is combined with a smooth control of body while a suggested or hidden pulse animates and relieves the restraint.

Before I got to Burma, the fame of the dancer Po-Sein had reached me. He is to Burma what Koshiro Matsumoto is to Japan, and what Mei Lan-Fang is to China. I made inquiries immediately upon my arrival but Po-Sein was most difficult to reach. He appears only on very great occasions such as the visit of the Prince of Wales, or the Duke of Connaught, and has a troupe of some eighty people, musicians and dancers with him. When the British Embassy exhibit at Wembly was being organized Po-Sein was asked to go with his company to

dance for a short season, but he figured it would cost 5,000 pounds sterling for expenses alone, a price which the management considered prohibitive. Various members of the British official circles had promised to have Po-Sein dance for us or at least arrange an interview. They failed, but finally my friend Mg. Paw Tun came to my aid. It turned out that Po-Sein was his personal friend and that he had befriended Po-Sein officially many times. It seems that Po-sein had been ill. A few weeks previously he had lost his favorite wife, and though he has four others and apparently an endless number of children, he was maintaining a strict period of mourning and could not appear in public. Nevertheless, we were invited to his house and spent two long afternoons with him. The first afternoon we discussed Burmese dancing, its history, its principles, and his own career. The second afternoon he had a large group of girls who performed the only ensemble dancing we saw. These girls moved together with flawless precision. Po-Sein himself danced a bow dance, a sword dance and also a lovely duet with his leading actress dancer. He spoke with considerable detail of the technical training of child pupils. Po-Sein mentioned that he had several visits from Madame Pavlowa when she had appeared in Burma three years before, but that he had never given so much material to any person other than a Burman in his life as he gave to us, nor had any ever asked for so much.

We had been costuming a Burmese ballet for our own Denishawn dancers to perform in America on our next tour, but had had some difficulty in getting the right cut of the jackets. Po-Sein called his own dressmaker and during the afternoon she cut, fitted and completed a jacket for Miss St. Denis, which had the necessary perky lines. Po-Sein broke his period of mourning to the extent of attending two of our programs at the Excelsior Theatre in Rangoon and told the Paw Tuns that he had never seen any hands so marvelous as those of Ruth St.

Denis, adding that they compared favorably with his own. Our lessons with Po-Sein we consider among the great treasures which we received from the Orient.

The Burmese themselves have divided their styles of dancing into various types: the ordinary Pwe which I have described, the Yein Pwe, which is the ensemble dancing, and is usually given at a country festival where the ensemble is composed of the girls of the village. Formerly it was given by trained companies of dancers in the palace of the King. Then there is a "zat" pwe in which the drama element is uppermost, there being enacted a definite narrative and the dance being incidental. One of the latter is called the Yama Zat in which the legend of the Ramayana is acted and danced. The professional actresses are called "zatthama." The most famous was Yindaw Ma Le, called the "Mandalay Diva." Unlike most Eastern women she kept her powers and her beauty remarkably well, and though her voice failed latterly, she made up to look as well as she had nearly twenty years before when she sang in Amarapoora, the City of the Immortals. Po-Sein spent his early days as leading man for this great actress, playing the Prince to her Princess in the Ramayana.

The finest book on Burma, really a classic, is "The Burman; His Life and Notions" by Shway Yoe published first in 1882. In it we find much information on the dance. "The yein pwe," he writes, "the choral dances, are very often executed by amateurs, and imply considerable skill and long practice under competent instructors. The 'coup d'oeil' is very attractive, and the effect of the different groupings quite as good as anything to be seen in the incidental ballet of the European stage, while the brilliance of the dresses and the ebbing and flowing chorus of the dancers add to the picturesqueness of the whole. The yein flourishes most in small villages, where the most promising of the youth of both sexes are taken in charge by a skilled saya, who trains them assiduously together until they have at-

A Yein Pwe on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon

tained perfection. Even in these dances the sexes do not mingle. There are meimma yein and yauka yein, the former usually eschewing complex movements, and sitting in rows on the ground, richly decked with bracelets, and dalizan necklaces falling over their silken vests or tight fitting lace bodices. The dancing consists of the usual pirouetting, or perhaps it ought to be called winding, on both feet, with much serpentine movements of the arms and the head. The loosening of the elbow-joint is greatly practised by Burmese girls with a view to these performances, and also under the impression that it is elegant in itself. From early years the arm is so manipulated that the forearm can be bent back so as to form a curve outwards, and this accomplishment is steadily exhibited on all occasions in public by a belle who has acquired it. Very often the meimma yein is performed by a body of girls, who succeed one another in successive groups. All are seated at first. The chorus is led by a woman who herself does not dance, and is usually the instructress of the troupe. She begins in a low recitative gradually swelling until at last the first group rise and go through a stately performance. They are succeeded by the next row, who

are more lively in their movements, and so on to the last, who are usually young girls, and so much more rapid and varied in their figures than their elder predecessors. Finally, all join in some complicated evolutions, and finish up seated in some prearranged figure. But as a rule the meimma yeins, though pretty enough as a mere spectacle, have not sufficient action to redeem them from the accusation of tiresome sameness brought against individual dancing, and they are always so discreet that they might be performed by Sunday school teachers.

"A yein is a favorite way of greeting a great man, or an English official on his arrival in a village. It is not so expensive as a zat pwe, it is more quickly arranged, allows the sons and daughters of the chief people to distinguish themselves, and lasts just as long as is pleasing to the person it is intended to honour."

The Burmese makes no distinction between secular dancing and religious dancing and the festivals given at the pagoda include the same type of dancing as has been described in the yein pwes. Even on the platform of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda which is the most sacred shrine of the Buddhist religion in all Burma, these dances have been performed on occasions of great religious importance.

Of social dancing in Burma there is none at all. The boys and girls of the village get an outlet for their need of rhythmic movement in the yein pwes. Now and then a man becomes excited at a boat-race or buffalo fight, and tucks his paso tightly about his thighs and capers away until his bare legs tire. The Burmese women are the freest of all the Orient. They go anywhere alone and unprotected at any time of day or night. They are the practical heads of the family and most of the shops and bazaars are kept by them; but in spite of this fact there is an established convention that the person of a Burmese woman is sacred, and must not be touched socially by a man, so our

A Yein Pwe at a garden party celebration

modern "hugging to music" has no chance even to get a start in Burma.

As the dance of a country is, so is its inner health. Burma's dance is vigorous and varied and popular. The mood of her people is lively and contented and active. She shows the signs of a prosperous growing life. Her dance is robust, her endurance tremendous, her emotions sound, her actions free and daring. Though she may not have the vision in her art that the high gods demand, yet with the lesser gods she has found favor.

Chapter VII

NAUTCH DANCERS OF OLD INDIA

Through the many years of my love for Mother India, I have read many books, and when I knew definitely that I was to see India herself, I further provided myself with various other books on India which I read on shipboard. Invariably the author, generally in his preface, explains that the word "India" is merely a convenient geographical grouping together of all that land lying south of the Himalayas, but is in reality not a unity in any way, rather a conglomerate of five or six distinct races, four major and many minor religions, one hundred and fifty-six distinct languages or dialects, to say nothing of the political parties and sects whereby each unit is divided against itself. This part of the map so easily called India, is slightly smaller in area than the United States, and has 320,000,000 inhabitants, or more than three times the population of the United States. Thus the author fortifies himself against the criticism that his work is not exhaustive. There was so much to be seen and so little time to see the many kinds of dancing in the many colorful provinces of India! So let me join this throng of apologists and add also my cry that it is impossible to write about anything except phases or aspects of India, or even Indian dancing; the whole can never be written by one man or by all men of all times.

The magic word of Indian dancing to me had been "Nautch;" it had always stood for romance; it had conjured up palaces of Rajahs, perfume and incense laden air, long sensuous nights, dark-eyed and dazzling dancers, who wove

spells by the complicated rhythmic patterns of sound created by their ankle bells. When, in the spring of 1911, in Denver, Colorado, I first saw Ruth St. Denis dance her Nautch, I found the reality of my dreams; it was all I had hoped for and more. The fact that Miss St. Denis had at that time never been in India had no place in my thoughts; I took her performance as justification for my belief in the ravishing beauty and charm of the Nautch.

During the years that followed I read every word about Nautch dancing that I could discover, and talked at length to travelers who had visited India. In the books written by Americans or Europeans I found discouraging testimony, which was further vehemently corroborated by the returned traveler; Nautch dancing was dull, and Nautch girls obese, vulgar and illiterate.

It is true that in books such as Ridgway's "Dramas and Dramatic Dancing" it was explained that all Nautch dancing was founded on a religious basis having to do always with the legend of the God Krishna, his deified wife, Rahda, and the story of their meeting and their love. Writers like Havell and Coomaraswamy, who believe that India is the Alpha and Omega of all that is good, true and beautiful, that her art is the finest, that India is the matrix of the world, more ancient of history than all the others, and her spirituality deeper and higher than that of any other people, naturally saw the dancing of India through these rosy spectacles. However vague and diffuse their statements, they managed somehow to suggest that the inner meaning, the esoteric significance had been so subtly expressed, and in gestures so gradually changed through the centuries from realism to symbolism, that only one with trained vision could understand or appreciate. The Begum Fyzee-Rahamin who visited America some years ago, described to me the infinite superiority of real Nautch dancing to any dancing of any description to be seen in Europe or America.

Among her tales was one of a "Peacock" dance in which the dancer performed on a large white sheet in the corners of which were piles of colored powders. The dancer, keeping constantly a complicated rhythmic beat with the feet, danced in and out of these colored powders and when the dance was finished she had drawn a peacock on the white sheet at her feet!

The only dancer who had been in India that I knew, gave strangely vague replies to my questions about the real Nautch dancers in India; the most intelligent technical information I ever received came through a series of articles by Lily Strickland Anderson, an American composer who lives in Calcutta, and which were published in *Musical Courier*. The various swamis and Hindu students whom one meets out of India, being religiously inclined, do not move in Nautch circles, and most of them have never seen a Nautch dancer in their lives. About four years ago or more in London I watched a tryout of a vaudeville act—which however, did not succeed in getting booked—produced by an East Indian, in which he presented what purported to be real Nautch dancing although the girls were all English, trained by himself. And in moving pictures taken by Burton Holmes and other lesser travelogue men, one had flashes of dancing in India, but always too brief for real information.

I have made so long a preamble because it seemed desirable to present a picture of my mental background and preparation before I went to India myself.

After we left Burma, our first port in India was Calcutta, the largest city in the province of Bengal. It is an extremely Europeanized city with tramcars, electric lights, paved streets, congestion of motor traffic, and huge hotels and restaurants. One had to go into the native bazaars to get any sense of being in a foreign country, the shops near the hotels make one think

of Atlantic City—rich materials hurled together to sell quickly to the undiscriminating. And far more evil is the making up and manufacturing of goods for tourist trade.

Immediately I started my search for Nautch dancers. Our connections in Calcutta were wide and varied, embracing officials both English and American, Mrs. Anderson, the composer, Hindus in religious and art circles, and other miscellaneous people who had local power and were willing to put it at our disposal. But each one answered to the plea for Nautch dancers, "There is no worth-while dancing in Bengal. You must go north to see any real Nautch dancing." Mrs. Anderson reported attending, the previous month, a huge affair given by a millionaire rajah, who paid, so it was rumored, three thousand rupees to the chief Nautch dancer of his group of entertainers for the evening. This dancer wore men's socks and sang "It's a long way to Tipperary" of which she knew less than half of the words, but was not in any way abashed by this fact, repeating the offering over ten times during two hours, and interlarding her vocal performance by "dancing" which consisted of a vocabulary of four steps repeated again and again.

Finally, through Mr. Jenkins of our American Consulate, we were invited by a wealthy Mohammedan merchant to a Nautch party given for all of the Denishawn Dancers. It was reported to us that we were to see the finest and most famous dancer in India, who had just returned to Calcutta from the North. This affair came off at the very end of our eighteen day stay in Calcutta. At our request, it was given in the afternoon.

The house was a small palace; the big room in which the dancing occurred glittered with seemingly endless mirrors and crystal chandeliers, while floor, furniture and draperies were red plush of the best early General Grant period. The food was served by the most fashionable European caterer and was

delicious, and very welcome, as it served to while away part of the hour-and-a-half delay while the orchestra was rounded up.

The two dancers were both in beautiful white saris, richly embroidered in real silver. One was about sixty years old, emaciated, but sprightly: this was Bachwa Jan, the most famous dancer in India, who has had no successful rival among the younger generation. The other was a little too plump from our standard of beauty, but quite handsome; she wore a king's ransom in emeralds and diamonds, set in platinum. Her name was Malka Jan—more famed for her singing than her dancing, a very highly paid artist and considered very beautiful. Both ladies chewed "pan" in the approved manner. "Pan" is a combination of leaf, lime, cardamon seed, and betel nut, which produces a bloody froth when chewed, dyeing tongue, teeth and mouth in a way which almost terrifies the newcomer. Being by nature like Jurgen who would "taste any drink once" I also chewed pan—but once was enough.

The usual orchestra for a Nautch dancer consists of a drummer who uses two drums, called tapla, tuned high and low, two men who play stringed instruments called "sarangis," and one who plays a pair of small bell-like cymbals. The orchestra plays a long introduction during which the dancer stands waiting in the manner of a singer with a pianist "vamping until ready." Bachwa Jan during this introduction wound around her white stockinged ankles a long rope on which had been threaded many bronze bells, the two strings of bells we were told weighing over twenty pounds. Then she raised her arms, the right one shoulder high, the other above her head, the fingers placed very carefully in what looked to me the old Gilbert school type of ballet hands, and there she stood. Occasionally the fingers quivered, there was an almost imperceptible pulse in her whole body, her gaze was fixed and glassy, and now and then one eyebrow lifted. After nearly three whole minutes of this she re-

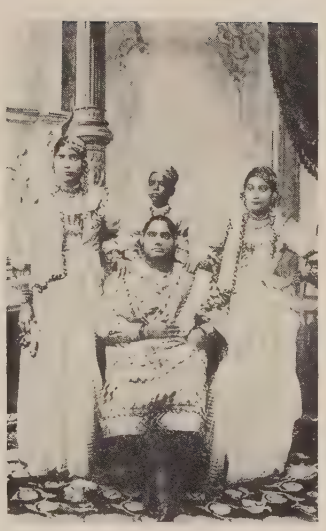
Malka Jan of Calcutta

Nautch girls of Cawnpore performing a fire dance

laxed and bowed—this was the first dance or movement and the Mohammedan gentlemen present applauded vociferously, as we did after the idea dawned upon us that applause was expected for that static performance. The second movement had more pulse in the body, visible more distinctly in the shoulders. Slowly she began tapping one foot, making the ankle bells sound. Then without any warning whatever, she sprang into action, producing an explosion of beats with her feet like a bunch of firecrackers, while her hands described rapid but deft circles over her head, her whole body turning completely around now this way, now that. This rapid movement finished as suddenly as it began, and she bowed again to rapturous applause. In her third movement, having placed her arms in the same opening position, she walked forward the whole length of the room, so smoothly that we heard not one single tinkle out of the twenty pounds of bells, then with a simple beating step she worked gradually back to her starting point, and bowed again. Her fourth movement consisted of tapping, slightly but distinctly, alternating feet, hands on hips while she gradually lowered herself to a kneeling position. The hips swayed in a manner which forty years ago must have been seductive, and her head moved in an uncanny way from side to side as if having no relation to the body. This movement is common to all the Orient; I have seen it in North Africa, in Burma and elsewhere. And during this lowering process, very slow and very controlled, there was a veritable dance of the eyebrows, each eyebrow lifting alternately in time to the music.

After Bachwa had danced for over an hour, Miss St. Denis improvised to the native music in the Nautch manner, so much to the delight of the Indians present that Bachwa gave Miss St. Denis a pair of her own anklets. Both Bachwa Jan and Malka Jan attended our performances at the Empire Theatre in Calcutta and came back stage afterwards.

A typical nautch girl



A group of nautch girls

A Kashmiri nautch dancer

The famous Bachwa Jan

In the meantime an amazing thing happened, the full meaning of which did not dawn on us for many weeks. The two East Indian dances which Miss St. Denis retained on our program for India with fear and trembling had turned out to be the sensational success of the whole engagement. The largest volume of sound proceeded from the natives, although the English were, in their conventional way, also enthusiastic. But day by day the Indian attendance grew, until the seats reserved for them were inadequate, and another section was given to them. Each day both the "Dance of the Black and Gold Sari" and the "Nautch Dance" were encored to a shouting, almost frenzied Indian audience, and although we were giving a repertoire of four complete programs, it was not permitted to omit either of these dances on any program. Later the reason for this became apparent. All the dancers of India come from almost the lowest class or caste, many of them from a caste called "Kathak." They are all illiterate, most of them professional prostitutes. The seclusion of women in India is such that wives and mothers and sisters are never present at such an entertainment. A man may give a party for his men friends, but none of the female members of his family, nor of his friends' families, are present. The women at these gatherings are professional entertainers, and are looked down upon by all of the upper castes. It is then easy to understand the excitement over Miss St. Denis' East Indian dances. Bringing cultured and educated mentality to bear upon the subject material of the Nautch, having a richness and purity beyond the conception of these native women, and having a beauty and charm of person not possessed by them, it would naturally follow that the Indians would see in her performance an art-form with which they were familiar, but so transformed and uplifted that it appeared almost as if an Apsaras had descended from Indra's heavenly court to dance for them.

In Bombay, where we played eighteen days at the Excelsior

Theatre, this success of Miss St. Denis' Indian dances was repeated on even a greater scale. Several times the audience was more than nine-tenths native, and their enthusiasm knew no bounds. The Indian papers printed in English all gave most glowing reviews, and one editor commented editorially upon the pity (to India) that its own art had to be revealed to them by an artist from the Western world. Our search for native Nautch dancing went on. In Bombay we have friends, Parsees, who have visited America and had been our guests in California some years ago. So the first thing I asked of Mr. Cama was that he find me a Nautch girl. He looked a little embarrassed and finally confessed that in all of his life, he had never seen a Nautch! I found this quite common in Bombay—many native Indians there had never seen any Indian dancing at all. We were given a moonlight garden dinner by the Nizam of Hyderabad in his Bombay palace on Malabar Hill. It was intended that we should be entertained by a Nautch group on that occasion, but the one only Nautch girl, reputed to have been in Bombay, had escaped to Delhi. At this party and elsewhere I asked who was considered the greatest living dancer in India, and without exception the name of Bachwa Jan was given in answer.

Finally a young American moving picture director, now employed by an Indian company, producing Indian films for Indian audiences, turned up and to him we told our tale of woe about the scarcity of Nautch girls. He invited us to the studio to see the films produced by his company in which Nautch dancing occurred; and possibly to see the dancers themselves if they were in the city. The first time we visited the studio, of course, the dancers themselves were not available. In the projecting room, a film was shown us in which a moving picture Rajah is entertained by a moving picture of a Nautch girl. It was beyond any possibility of description in printable words! A girl on a farm, taking a correspondence

school course in "Oriental" dancing from a teacher in Keokuk, could have produced nothing worse. This child (a girl of twelve years of age, from her appearance) wore baggy Turkish trousers, "breastplates" of imitation pearl beads, a piece of goods pinned in the middle on her back and tied to each wrist, and God-knows-what on her head. She skipped six times in one direction, dropped on one knee, rose and dropped to the other knee, skipped six steps in another direction, repeated the knee movement; and kept this up through one reel of film! Remember that the producer was Mohammedan, the dancer a native Indian girl, the audiences to which it was released made up entirely of East Indians! This is a straw to show how the theatrical wind blows in India to-day .

We tried several native theatres to see native drama. We found generally the tawdriest of new plays written about India in its transition period—the actors wearing the conglomerate of native and European clothes which is an eyesore on the streets of Calcutta and Bombay. When they attempted to do any of the old plays dealing with ancient legends, the scenery, the costumes, the stage management and the acting were about on a par with the shows we used to give in the barn and for which we charged two pins admission (bent pins not accepted.) And in these companies when dancing is required, the Nautch girl is inevitably a boy—and most unmistakably a boy—in girls' clothes. Some of these boys dance with considerable deftness as to steps, but I understand are rated even lower than a real Nautch girl, who finds it beneath even her low caste to appear on the stage of a theatre.

Another day in the moving picture studio, we saw films even more discouraging after which a group of girls danced for us. One was about thirteen years old, costumed in the moving picture style, which is to say, much tinsel, glass beads, feathers and what-not put on in a hybrid manner. Later, however, two girls, older, wearing saris, danced and sang with

A nautch boy on the Streets of Quetta, Baluchistan

considerable charm and feeling. Both sang better than they danced and had volatile and lively facial expressions. The producer told us that he was having some of his younger girls trained to dance—a teacher, reputed to have come from London and New York, was teaching them, and they had already learned a gypsy dance and a butterfly dance on their toes!

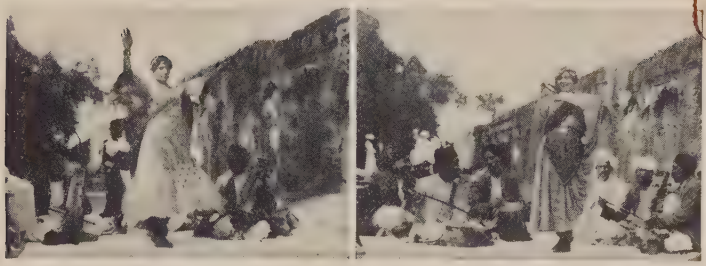
After Bombay, we went by boat to Karachi in the province of Sind. There we found nothing at all. Then after a week of performances in Karachi, we proceeded to Quetta in Baluchistan, only forty miles from the Afghanistan border, where there is a huge British army post. We found this place most fascinating, totally untouched by tourists, with enchanting bazaars. The town was completely surrounded by a high mountain range covered with snow, and everywhere on the floor of the valley almond and apricot trees were in bloom. It was the time of two festivals—one Mohammedan and one Hindu; the Hindu festival was called Holi, and was celebrated in part by people throwing handfuls of colored powder over each other and squirting dye over each other's clothes from little wooden squirt guns. I need not say that we gathered much local color

here. But most interesting to us were the bands of street Nautch dancers whom we met nearly every day. These troupes had come for the festival times and ranged in and out the bazaar streets stopping to give a performance whenever and wherever four annas was offered (this amount equals eight cents of our money and for that they would perform for an hour). It turned out that all of these Nautch girls were boys! But in some of these instances the matter was in some doubt! However, although their vocabulary of steps, movements, gestures, was limited, they all danced with splendid rhythm, vigor, and an apparent love of the dance. One group had an amusing clown who jumped into the arena occasionally and assisted the two dancers with an accompaniment of intricate but licentious movements—much to the delight of the assembled crowd. We were able to make both moving pictures and still pictures of some of these groups.

Of course, these are not "pukka" Nautch dancers. They know a few steps which they repeat over and over again, and the dance has no story nor inner meaning—it being offered obviously for mere entertainment and for frankly sensual suggestion.

From Quetta we next went to Lahore, capital of the Punjab. What a host of memories Lahore brings up; it was here that much of India's greatest history was lived, and the opening scene of "Kim," that immortal book, finds Kim astride the "Zamzama," the great gun in front of the Lahore Museum.

In Lahore, through native friends, we were able to secure the services of the finest teacher of Nautch dancing in the Punjab. Pandit Hira Lal was engaged (at a price which equalled the best dance instruction in New York) to come daily to the theatre where we were playing and give all of us a two hour lesson. He brought his own orchestra each day—they had one good tune which they stuck to faithfully for two hours without a letup each day. When I inquired through interpreters



Nautch girls dancing for Miss St. Denis and Mr. Shawn at a Tomasha in Shalimar Gardens, Lahore

if they knew anything else, they said "Why certainly"! and proceeded to play the same tune both faster and slower.

He taught us the "Mohr Nach" or Peacock dance, in which the circular skirt is slowly raised with quivering arms, while the body slowly turns in a very controlled and delayed tour de basque and is then lowered into a kneeling position and raised again. He agreed that the real Nautch dancing is all based upon, related to, or derived from the Rahda and Krishna legend; that it had its Golden Age in the time of Akbar, founder of the Mogul Empire, but that at this time it had begun to take on a more secular character and to be employed solely for purposes of entertainment.

Hira Lal's eyebrows were something to write not sonnets, but epic poems about. I have never seen such an eyebrow virtuoso. In one of his many dances, with his whole body panting with suppressed (and practically conventionalized) passion, he performed for one long movement, probably over one minute, with his eyebrows alone.

The general scheme of his dances, or modes, was to establish a posture idea in a long quiet introduction. Then while holding this posture unchanged he would engage upon a series of beats with his feet, producing with the ankle bells a rapid, intricate

and fascinating pattern of sounds. After this came to a sudden finish there was a quiet receding movement to the point of starting, and the dance was finished. Each posture was taken from some portion of the Rahda and Krishna story. For instance, the eyebrow movement I have already spoken of was done while the arms suggested Krishna holding his flute in one hand while the other arm was around Radha's waist. Another posture had the hand above the head in such a way that the thumb rested on the head, the three middle fingers were folded in, and the little finger was pointed heavenward. This single posture tells to the Indian audience a whole legend in which Krishna is supposed to have held a whole hill, called Govardhana, aloft over a village so as to give shelter to the cow-herds of Brindhavana from a continuous downpour of rain sent by Indra in anger in order to flood their small village. Another posture of hand above head is supposed to indicate Krishna's slightly askew head dress. With arms outstretched and body swaying he gave the suggestion of a rocking boat and another movement imitated the rowing of the boat. The beating together of forefingers indicated a village dance known all over India in which the dancers use small sticks which they beat in rhythm to the dance. All of these postures, as I have said, were first established quietly, then maintained while a rapid series of beats or taps were executed with the feet, and then dissolved during a quiet third movement. The actual steps, tapping and beats were no different from those which we already knew and had used at Denishawn always. His rapidity of executing some of the more complicated combinations, however, excited our sincere admiration and there were many subtleties of movement, bodily posture, and use of hands which added to our knowledge.

Hira Lal also granted the palm to Bachwa Jan as the greatest living Nautch dancer, but placed as a close second Nanua Jan who is now in the services of the Nawab Rampur. This im-

A dancing girl of Delhi and her orchestra

portant Mohammedan prince, ruling a native state, is a great patron of the arts, and maintains under yearly salary a great corps of musicians and dancers. Several of the best men Nautch dancers are also in his service. Upon inquiry I find that when men dancers, not impersonating female parts, dance in men's characters and men's clothes, the technique is no different from that of a woman dancer and they use the same vocabulary of steps. Occasionally in a large Nautch the man dancer impersonates Krishna, the leading female dancer Radha, and the other dancers the Gopis, the cow-herd girl companions of Radha.

In Delhi where still other dancers danced for us, my thoughts turned to Vanda Hoff, who made her debut in the Denishawn company and later starred in vaudeville in an act called "The Dancing Girl of Delhi." In loveliness, charm and real ability what infinite worlds above the real dancing girls of Delhi was our Vanda!

Soon we went back to Calcutta for a return engagement and then into the South of India, which is preponderantly Hindu, as against the strong Mohammedan influences in the North.

There dancing still has a religious significance, and is done in the temples as a vital part of the worship. Even the Hindu Gods are all depicted as dancing most of the time.

Were I to judge India by the condition of the Nautch dancing according to the old Chinese proverb, that judges the government of a country in the light of the dancing of the people, it would be a sorry, almost tragic judgment. But my dreams of the romance of the Nautch are almost shattered. Years ago in London a retired Indian Army Colonel, seeing Miss St. Denis dance at the Scala Theatre there, wrote a letter to the *Times* suggesting that the Government send Miss St. Denis to dance in India. We took it as a pleasantry at that time. However, to-day it becomes a serious reality. Sir Rabindranath Tagore, who attended our opening night in Calcutta, suggests the possibility of having Miss St. Denis come to his co-educational University to teach there her vision of the real beauties lying inherent but neglected in the dances of India. What a world!

Chapter VIII

DANCES OF ABORIGINES IN INDIA

The Hindus and the Mohammedans who make up the large majority of the people of India are from Aryan and Dravidian stock. History tells us that thousands of years ago, (so far back that no definite dates can accurately be set) there were two great invasions of the Indian peninsula from the North, and that the present day inhabitants derive from these two sources. But, previous to this influx of the two new races, India was inhabited by a race of primitive peoples about whom scientists have come to no satisfactory conclusion. They have traits in common with the aborigines of Australia, and also with those of the South Sea Islands.

It was a matter of great surprise to me to learn that there were approximately twenty-five million of these aborigines still living in India, practically unchanged through the centuries, still maintaining their racial purity, their own religious beliefs and social customs. There are many tribes, each speaking a different dialect, and having a certain locality as home—the Nagas living on the frontier between India and Upper Burma, and the majority of the others, the Santals, the Hos, the Mundas and Oraons living in Central India, in a district called Chota Nagpur.

I took advantage of a week's vacation in our tour in India to penetrate into the heart of this aboriginal country and to see these primitive people dance. The traveling was hot and dirty. It was necessary to change trains many times and at inconvenient hours, and to piece out by other odd conveyances beyond the railroad. But it was worth it all.

The Rajah of the Santals invited me to be his guest at a Santal village near Jumtara. I arrived about noon and after stowing my things away at the Dak Bungalow, I awaited the equipage of the Rajah. He sent for me a not too impressive horse drawn vehicle, and I rode for several hours into the country. At the village the Rajah greeted me and sent word out to all the villagers to assemble. They had been informed of my coming, and there had been no work during the day—only bathing and personal adornment!

Soon I heard drums, and down a road leading to a great open dancing space came four naked drummers—boys about sixteen years of age, two with long drums, two with kettle shaped drums. Behind them was a group of other men and boys, and about sixteen women. The women had homespun white sarees wound around their bodies in the Hindu manner, but had no choli or jacket beneath, so that the back and breasts were bare. They were tattooed with a striped pattern on both arms from wrists to neck. The drummers led the procession into the big open dancing space, and all went at once into dance formation. The women lined up according to height, with hands linked and forearms laid against each other. They remained in this closed formation, the steps advancing and retreating, with a continuous progression to the left, and a marked pulse throughout the whole body which proceeded from the knees—not a hip movement or shoulder movement, as one would first analyze it, but the movement of the body as a whole. Each woman had two scarlet hibiscus blossoms in her hair, one pointing downward from her left ear, and the other pointing upward from the knot of hair, which was dressed low and big at the back of her head. Her jewelry was of silver, necklaces, earrings, bracelets and anklets, heavy in design.

The chief dancers—that is to say the ones whose movements were both more vigorous and more complicated than the rest—were the drummers themselves. They were youths of twenty

Oraons—another aboriginal tribe of India—dancing

The Rajah of the Santals

or under, save for one man who was obviously the leader. Their costume was the irreducible minimum: a loin cloth of meagre proportions and in some instances nothing else, not even jewelry. Some wore a wisp of cloth turbanwise about the head, and a cluster of white flowers stuck into the turban behind the ear.

These drummers, two with long drums and two with round drums, danced in perfect unison, while providing what music there was for the entire party to dance to. They faced the women dancers at the start. Then the right foot was picked up until the heel touched the thigh, and from that position they glided three long steps, ending faced away from the women. The picking up of the foot was repeated, two gliding steps, a turn of the tour de basque type, a low jeté tour ending in a deep plié from which they rose to extreme half-toe and then finished with heels down, followed by a motionless pause of four beats of the drums. This whole routine was repeated many times, and later combined with many variations, such as the whole group of drummers doing somersaults exactly as one man and never losing a beat of the drums while doing so.

All this time the women kept up their advancing and retreating steps with their arms joined, and by progressing always to the left, described a huge circumference around the dancing field. At times they broke their hold and clapped their hands. At other times they bent low and made rhythmic motions as of gathering something from the ground. During this latter movement of the women, the men were shouting and jumping high from the ground and making long runs across the whole dancing field, evidently in a spirit of great glee. It was explained to me that this dance is a dramatization of the gathering of the mohua blossoms, a flower which grows on a tree, and which is brewed by the natives into a powerful intoxicating beverage.

It gradually dawned upon me that I was watching a dance

The Santals—an aboriginal tribe of India in a village dance

The Santal men dance and play the drums simultaneously

of indubitable charm, and one which was of no low order, inasmuch as it presented considerable complication beautifully and efficiently harmonized. The two groups of women were doing one thing, the two groups of drummers were doing another, an auxiliary group of drummers still a third thing, while a group of little boys and old men made a fourth movement motif, all four of these producing a real orchestration of movement—a fugue-like construction of four voices—separate, yet welded into one beautiful whole.

And furthermore, the people themselves became more and more attractive to me—they were so joyous, so carefree, and so direct in their gaze. The Hindus and Mohammedans, as a whole, are a sad and tragic people. There are babies and there are old men and women, but youth seems to be non-existent. There is little laughter and little play to be seen in India compared to our own country, and so it was refreshing to come in contact with these childlike Santals, whose bodies were beautiful, and whose features had that beauty which the Marquesans and Tahitians must have—if one may judge from photographs.

After my return to Calcutta I was having tiffin with the Bishop of Calcutta at his house, and telling him about my visit to the Santals. I gave the opinion I had formed of them. He was delighted, and told me in return that he had worked for fourteen years among these aboriginal tribes of Chota Nagpur, and had always maintained that they were a delightful and lovable race. Also he said he had had many disputes on this subject with others of the clergy. The Bishop then introduced me to the work of Sarat Chandra Roy, an Indian who has made a life study of these people, and has published several volumes about them. In his book called "The Mundas and Their Country," I find the following:

All the distinctly religious Mundari festivals have their appropriate dances and songs. And music invariably accompanies

this dancing and singing. The principal class of Mundari songs and dances are the Mage of Jarga, the Jadura, and Japi, and the Lahsua or Karam. The Mage dances and songs begin from after the October-November festival and continue into December. The dances of the last fortnight are called Jarga. From after this the Jadur and Gena dances are taken up and continue for two or three weeks, during which period the Munda youth have their principal hunting excursions. Then follow the Lahsua or Karam dances and songs which go right up to the Sohorai festival in October-November. Thus the Mundas have a regular round of still-returning dances all the year through. These dances are classified by the Mundas according to the different postures of the body in dancing, into two classes —namely, standing dances and stooping dances. These are subdivided according to the time of year and dramatic meaning. In some of the dances we have pantomimic representations of agricultural operations such as reaping. It is not religious exaltation or the pleasure of the performance alone that prompts these dances. Social joy and merriment finds rhythmic expression in the steps of the dance. There are special dances for marriage festivals and war dances.

As the afternoon of my visit to the Santals wore on, the crowd grew, and different villages sent in their dancing units. On an average, sixteen or twenty women and as many men arrived from each village until at sundown there were several hundreds taking part in this great dance festival. The Rajah invited me to return later in the spring at a time when I could see thousands dancing on the plain at one time.

The dancing was attended by a good deal of actual drinking as well as the pantomime of drinking I have already spoken of, and as the hours wore on the dancers became gayer and gayer. Since there was no possibility of concealing anything "on the hip" because of the almost zero costume worn, there must have been a secret jug somewhere in the crowd. And furthermore, I am told, and Sarat Chandra Roy confirms this, that a

great deal of sexual license follows upon these long drawn out dancing festivals, some of which end in an absolute orgy. However, the whole primitive view of sex is so different from our modern and civilized view, that these people have no consciousness of wrong doing over the debauch.

I had expected, when I heard the word "aboriginal," something far different from what I saw in the dancing itself. Such American Indian dancing as I had seen gave me a mental picture of aboriginal movement, which was completely upset by the Santals. The men were singularly erect and easily soft in their movements, and there was a gay abandon that could hardly be described by any other word than Greek—in fact there were several times when a group actually skipped, using the step which is the foundation of the "nature" dancer's vocabulary. After each dance was finished the men's groups broke into a run, and cheered loudly as they swept around the circle of women, throwing flowers at them, which they had torn from their hair.

Sarat Chandra Roy, in another book dealing with other tribes of this aboriginal race—"the Oraons of Chota Nagpur" —has an admirable description of their dances and their actual patterns. In the villages of these people each girl and boy, when puberty arrives, leaves the parental roof, and lives in a village dormitory. All marriageable boys live in one big house under a caretaker, and the marriageable girls are likewise herded together under a guardian. The akhra, which is the great open space in the heart of the town, dedicated to the village dances, is the meeting and wooing place. After selection, betrothal and marriage, the young couple, of course, have a home of their own.

For the inmates of the Oraon village dormitories, songs and dances appear to form the chief items in the ordinary program of their night's business. In summer and winter nights, young

people of both sexes may be seen dancing and singing at the village akhra from evening till midnight, and often much later. And on occasions of their important religious festivals you generally find them dancing and singing whole days and nights.

Ordinarily, it is after their evening meals that the young men assemble at the akhra and begin to dance and sing. This is the signal for the girls to come out of their houses and join the dances. And in less than half an hour's time you see the young men and women all in their respective places on the dancing ground. On moonlit nights, you may occasionally find a few spectators seated for a while on the stone slabs that generally lie at one end of the akhra.

The Dhangar-Kotwar attends to the training of the Dhangars of the lowest grade in the secrets of the various styles of dancing and singing, and so too the Barka Dhangrin—the leader of the maidens—takes care to see that the younger girls properly imitate the older girls in the various steps of the dances and the different tunes of the songs. In villages with a small Oraon population, the young men and boys are arranged in one and the same line, the smallest boys standing at one end of the line, and the oldest and tallest at the other end, and the rest in the middle. And so too the girls stand in one line arranged according to the descending scale of their respective heights. But in the larger villages, where the number of boys and girls is large, the younger boys and girls are arranged in two or three rows behind the older boys or girls, as the case may be.

Thus singing and dancing, which were in their origin spontaneous rhythmic movements of the human voice and feet, under the weight of strong emotions, soon became even with such rude peoples as the Oraons, arts directed to definite end. That end, so far at least as Oraon dances are concerned, appears to be not merely the delight which the exercise itself affords, but, as we shall presently see, pantomimic representations of such incidents in their own lives as excite intense feelings of pleasure. Although such pantomimic representations may have their origin in the pleasure and excitement they afforded, they soon come to have a magical significance attached

to them. It came to be believed that by the law of sympathy such dramatic representation or imitation would help in some cases in bringing about the state of things imitated just as it is believed by the Oraon that the ceremony of dramatic rain-making is sure to be followed by actual rain. Dances and songs are also believed to bring happiness and prosperity, and a stimulation of the helpful forces of Nature so that the earth may be fruitful and the Oraon may be blessed with an abundance of animal and vegetable food, and the fertility of man and of the rest of creation may increase.

Spring the world over is the time of wooing and mating, so these primitive people have love and marriage dances all through the spring time. The season is ushered in by a marriage of the dead, and until this ceremonial dance has been performed, no real wedding in the tribe may take place. During the rest of the year the Oraons may not cremate their dead, but bury them. At this time, however, the bodies are disinterred, burned, and the bones gathered together, annointed, and a wedding ceremony performed over them, accompanied by special dances. The following weeks the real weddings of the tribe take place, each accompanied by much dancing, and at the end of the season, there is a great religious dance at which Mother-Earth is married to the Sun-God, these deities represented by the village priest and his wife.

After the wooing time is over, the men face the necessity of providing food for the newly established household, which for a primitive tribe is the first and foremost need. So in the summer, hunting dances are a preparation, a magic, and a relaxation from real animal hunts. In the spring dances, the formation mixes up the sexes, a girl and boy alternating. But in the hunting dances the men are in one separate group and the women in another. And another interesting fact in connection with these hunting dances is that when the men of the village are actually gone, the women dance almost all the time they

are away acting as much like men as possible, and dancing the parts which the men dance when they are at home. This is supposed to have originated from a desire to give out the impression to enemies that all was going on as usual in the village, and to disguise the fact that there was no one at home but women, children and the aged. In the spring dances and marriage dances the men all carry musical instruments, and dance and play at the same time, but in the summer dances the men have clubs and spears, and their movements are pantomimic movements of the chase.

War dances come at about this time—the wars in the past having been tribal wars started from disputes over game, or disputes over certain hunting territory. These dances are mock combats between two factions, and sometimes are danced by two different tribes, ending in a real fight. An amusing thing is that another war dance is always performed by men in front of the bride on her way to the bridegroom's house. This the Hindus do also, and in the streets of Cawnpore one day I saw this dance. The men carried long bows, but instead of a bowstring was a wire on which were strung metal discs such as are inset into tambourines. These mock-warriors make horrible faces at each other, and at the musicians and at the crowds in the street, all the time keeping the discs of the bowstring rhythmically jingling, and producing some fascinating and complicated rhythms. The bride, carried in a sedan chair completely swathed by draperies so that she could neither see nor be seen, was stopped nearly every twenty-five feet of her progress by a repetition of this dance.

The rainy season dances are pantomimic representations of all the tasks to do with planting, growing and harvesting a crop. This is supposed to have magic power to aid the increase of the crop. These dances are very graceful, the bending and kneeling movements of planting and reaping being performed with extraordinary grace. The young men carry fronds of the wild

date palm and brush and caress the earth during one movement of the dance as if to coax Mother Earth to bear abundantly. After the harvest is successfully gathered in there is a period of ecstatic dancing, of relief, gratitude and joy. At these times it is no uncommon thing for some of the more sensitive boys and girls of the tribes to be seized by a frenzy and become hysterical to the point of having to be carried out of the dance by the elders.

Each of these dances has its distinct rhythm, song and musical instruments to accompany it; and each is distinctly unique and individual in its pattern and routine. The rules have been handed down through countless centuries, and in spite of there being in India three hundred million other people of different race and blood from them, these tribes have preserved to an amazing degree their own dances. They have borrowed however a few dances from Hindu sources which are used chiefly as social dances.

It was a great privilege to see the Santals dance inasmuch as they are a survival of what all mankind must have been like in ages past—they are at the childhood of mankind. I find in their dances a corroboration of all that Havelock Ellis has written about the dance being the source-art of the human race; for these people, who have no written language, no definite code of theology, no graphic or plastic arts—have an elaborate and comprehensive dance art, to which music, both instrumental and vocal, is the bond-slave and which has for thousands of years satisfied this delightful and lovable race and given release and expression to all their emotions and vision.

Chapter IX

DEMON DANCES OF TIBET

Something in me has always responded to the word "Himalayas" and in me something yearned toward these mightiest of mountains. So when I discovered that we were to have a week's vacation during our tour of India, my thoughts turned toward the eternal snows. I had heard of the dances performed by the Tibetan Lamas, and the Tibetan Devil Dances, and these were an added pull toward the North. It was a long hard journey to make, on three different trains, each more primitive than the one before—and the changes all in the middle of the night—which in India means carrying all your own bedding from train to train, besides food supplies and ordinary luggage. Furthermore, the time to go and come from Calcutta was such that it would leave me only a very few days in Darjeeling. So I began my usual wire-pulling to insure the fact that, in addition to the Himalayas, I should also see some of the Tibetan dancing in Darjeeling.

General Laden La is the door through whom one must pass, a Tibetan who has been to Lhasa and has served under the Dalai Lama, and is now President of the Buddhist Association of India. General Laden La is also head of the entire police force of the Darjeeling district, and no performance of the Lamas in the Buddhist monastaries can be seen except through him. Fortunately, I had a friend, a "Standard Oil boy" as they are affectionately called in India, who knew General Laden La. Finally I was assured that a special performance would be arranged for me during my stay in Darjeeling.

After my three train journeys, during the last of which we climbed to an altitude of nearly eight thousand feet above sea level, I reached Darjeeling, and found myself comfortably housed at the Mount Everest Hotel. Immediately I got in touch with General Laden La, and found that the performance in the Bhutia Monastery was scheduled for the following afternoon. Although I was late I went into the bazaars, which were thronged with new and strange types to me—Nepalese, Lepchas, Bhutias and Tibetans; all strongly Mongolian in type—weird, wild looking men, and handsome women, richly ornamented. Even the coolie women, who carried my luggage from the station up the steep hill to the hotel, carried hundreds of dollars in gold ornaments on their persons—gold beads as large as walnuts, separated by discs of red felt making necklaces, earrings as big as saucers, and nose plaques of solid gold larger than a dollar—hair ornaments, bracelets, anklets, all of gold. I went up and down the hills—there is absolutely no level space in Darjeeling—in a rickshaw pushed and pulled by four men, Tibetans with fur caps, pigtails, and huge turquoise and gold earrings. The bazaars were full of wonderful ornamented copper and brass work, and coral and turquoise jewelry.

The following day immediately after tiffin, General Laden La called at the Mount Everest for me, and we went miles along the mountain roads on horseback, until we came to the Bhutia Monastery—a lonely building set on a spur of hill with the majestic sweep of the Himalayas in the background. As we came around the curve of the road which first brought us in view of the monastery, a terriffic din was set up—drums beating and horns blowing, voices shouting—and General Laden La told me it was in my honour! This is the nearest that I have ever come to being met by a brass band at the station.

At the gateway to the monastery itself, the Head Lama and his two next in command greeted us with low obeisances. They

The Tibetan Lamas—Devil Dancer, Bhutia Monastery, Darjeeling

were all in gorgeous colors of brocaded silk, the costumes being very much in design like the Chinese mandarin dress, with a red cap like that of the ancient Trojans, or like the cap worn by our images of Liberty.

Within the compound I saw the orchestra. There was a drum house in which were two men playing on hanging drums, and a long shed, decorated gaily with banners, in which sat two men with long bronze horns—ten feet long! Then two short bronze horns, about two and a half feet in length, and then more drums. These men were all Lamas, priests living in this Buddhist monastery, and were in full regalia. Then I was conducted into the monastery itself. The outside porch was surrounded with prayer wheels—the Tibetan idea being that the prayer "Om mane padme hum" written on paper, and turned once around, is equivalent to that prayer being said. These monastery prayer wheels have the sacred words written sometimes one hundred times, and on one big one a million times, so that when one turns these big wheels, he has acquired the virtue of having said the prayer as many times as it is written on the wheel. An old woman, a hundred years of age at least, sat

turning the great wheel, and we were told that she did this from dawn to dark every day without ceasing, save for a few moments twice a day to partake of a very meagre meal.

Inside the building we saw the places of worship, and the library of Buddhist scriptures—each volume being written by hand in letters of gold leaf on a prepared black substance like dull oilcloth, while the covers were of hand carved wood. The two hundred and forty volumes filled one immense room. When we were again outside and had seated ourselves under a marquee erected to protect us from the sun, the performance began. General Laden La entertained me with a running commentary on the whole performance which was both diverting and educational. It seems that the Tibetans, during the unnumbered years before they were converted to Buddhism, were animists—that is believers in myriads of demons and spirits inhabiting or manifesting themselves through every phase of nature. There was no idea of any central deity or deities, but merely an unrelated complication of forces—the demon of the thunderstorm—the demon of cattle disease—the demon of fire—the tree spirits, the water spirits, cloud spirits, and so on.

Like all primitive people, the world over, the Tibetans exorcised these demons by means of dances. The scientists are not agreed upon the motive and purpose of these dances, but then perhaps the thoughts of the dancers themselves were mingled and confused. They might have had an idea of frightening the demon and driving him away if he was an evil spirit, or of flattering him into becoming friendly by an imitative dance and costume, or of partaking of his power by identifying themselves with him by likeness of costume and movement. Regardless of causes, the first Buddhist missionaries who went into Tibet found these dances in vogue, and being danced for different occasions and for different purposes all through the year. Very wisely, they did not attempt to eradicate a thing

which had such deep roots in human consciousness, but merely adapted these dances to serve Buddhism by creating legends in which the dance was woven into the Buddhist thought.

First there emerged from the doors of the monastery two masked figures—one male and one female. They were called "acharyas" or jesters. The two did many amusing things by themselves, and continued on through all that followed, imitating and burlesquing all the following serious dances—pretending to be frightened by the more violent things and applauding especially different and well executed steps. The hillside was thronged with Tibetans, mostly children, who were attracted by the sound of the orchestra, and the jesters were a great delight to the children. The acharyas did not do much actual dancing, but mostly humorous pantomime, occasionally, however, when imitating the difficult dancing of the other Lamas, the jesters themselves being Buddhist priests, they achieved some very good technical work.

The first big serious dance was called "The Black Hat Dance." General Laden La wrote out the story of it for me. I will give it in his own words:

In the ninth century King Ral-pa-chen, the grandson of King Trisrong Detsen of Tibet, had the important Indian Buddhist sacred scriptures and commentaries translated into Tibetan by learned men. He endowed most of the monasteries with State lands and granted them great privileges and devoted much of his time to Buddhism. His younger brother, Lang Darma (the incarnation of the elephant "lang," who after helping the three widows' sons in the construction of the great cha-tiva, sacred receptacle in Khatmandu, Nepal, malignantly offered a reverse prayer to harm the Buddhist religion) instigated and got his brother, King Ralpachen, murdered some time about 899 A. D. Lang Darma then ascended the throne and at once commenced to persecute the Lamas and did his utmost to uproot the religion. He desecrated the temples and monasteries, burned many of their books and treated the Lamas

with the grossest indignity, forcing many to become butchers.

He was assassinated in the third year of his reign by Lama Palki Dorje of Lhalung, who has since been canonized by his grateful church, and this murderous incident forms a part of the modern Lamas' dance. This Lama, to effect his purpose, assumed the guise of a strolling Black Hat Devil Dancer and hid in his ample sleeves a bow and arrow. His dancing below the King's palace, which stood near the west end of the cathedral of Lhasa, attracted the attention of the King, who summoned the dancer to his presence, when the disguised Lama seized an opportunity while near the King to shoot him with the arrow which proved almost immediately fatal. In the resulting tumult, the Lama sped away on a black pony, which was tethered near at hand, and riding on, plunged through the Kyichu River on the outskirts of Lhasa, whence his pony emerged in its natural white colour, as it had been merely blackened by soot, and he himself turned outside the white lining of his coat and by this strategy escaped his pursuers.

So the name of the Black Hat Dance is derived from this tragedy.

As a postscript to General Laden La's account, let me add that the original black hat is carefully preserved and can be seen in the Tra-ya-pa cave near Lhasa.

I must say a word about the music, for it was the strangest conglomeration of sounds I have ever heard. The two long horns, jointed like telescopes, and more than ten feet long, emitted sounds like nothing on earth—to say a fog horn in distress is only pointing the general direction. Some prehistoric animal imprisoned in the bowels of the earth might bellow forth its anguish in such tones. The shorter bronze horns were of the same tonality, only not so strong or deep. When the priests who blew these horns paused out of sheer inability to blow any more, the only accompaniment to the dances was the beating of the drums, about five varieties, which never ceased.

The black hat dancers, eight in all, emerged from the monastery one by one, and each dancer moved for about the

The ten foot long bronze horns

Ted Shawn with General Lobsang La and dancers

The thousand year old black hat dance

Dancers at the Mount Everest Hotel, Darjeeling

equal of sixteen measures of music, establishing the dance theme, before the next one joined him. There was a fountain in the centre of the natural courtyard formed by the monastery and the hill, and around this they danced. It was technically more interesting and more difficult than any one had led me to expect. Even Lily Strickland Anderson who had described a performance she had seen gave no idea of the actual movement. Mrs. Anderson described the quality of movement as that of people moving heavily under water. But while the movement was slow and ponderous some of the time, it was deliberately and positively so, and not as under an outside compulsion. Delsarte said that bigness, power and dignity of idea were conveyed sometimes by a very slow and controlled motion. These dancers were trying to convey the idea of supernatural beings possessed of more than ordinary human powers, and they used a most legitimate technical means to produce that effect.

As indicated in the scenario, the costume of the Lama in disguise had enormous sleeves, but was otherwise much after the style of a Chinese mandarin coat over mandarin skirts. The materials were rich silks and satins of those deep, luscious dyes only to be had in the Orient. The black hat was after the approved witch's pattern, a large circular brim, with a high conical crown. The peak of the crown had bows of coloured ribbons tied to it which hung down past the dancers' shoulders. The feet were encased in boots with thick padded soles much after the style of a Chinese actor's shoes.

General Laden La told me that these dances are all described in minute detail in writings possessed by the monastery, and that no deviation in a single step is allowed—that they are danced in every monastery the length and breadth of Tibet exactly alike, and that they have been danced in this unchanged form practically since 899.

In all the dances of the forenoon and the following morn-

ing, there was a marked similarity to the Russian peasant technique. Siberia and Mongolia touch the north Tibetan border, and it is possible that the Tartar, Mongolian and Tibetan dances are all from one root source. At any rate almost everything these dancers did can be described in ballet terms, and a fairly adequate picture presented. For instance, the black hat dancers entered with saute turn, alternating the free leg out behind, and up front in releve position. That is to say the first movement was almost a flying turn, and the second a hopping turn with the knee held hip high, and the foot down toward the earth. When this had been done three times complete, the dancer dropped into a definite plié preparation going immediately into a reverse pirouette twice around, and a stopping in pure ballet style. Each dancer did this movement upon entrance, and continued to do it; each new dancer went through the whole pattern eight times. The quality and speed of the movement, as I have said, was what gave it its individuality—the ponderous importance of it giving no appearance of similarity in style to the ballet froth. The likeness shows only when one analyzes the actual structure of the movement. The balancing of the high black hats, and the thick padded boots, also had an important part in the quality of movement.

When all the dancers were in, the patterns became practically *folk* dance—there were advancings and retreatings, foot-slappings and hopping turns, exchanging places by means of Italian tour type of turns, and dropping first to one knee and then to the other such as one sees in the Spanish jota. The exit was brought about in the same manner as the entrance by the last movement being sustained while one dancer made his exit at the end of one complete movement theme. The last movement had a sense of battling against some heavy wind. Perhaps this is where Mrs. Anderson got her under water simile—for they advanced with hopping turns a certain distance and then seemed to stagger back about three-fourths of that distance.

But finally each dancer gained the entrance to the monastery and disappeared.

Then came a skeleton dance. The enemy of Tibet and Lamaism was presented in effigy—a shapeless mass of dough. Two cemetery ghouls brought out the effigy and laid it in the centre of the courtyard. Then these two ghouls, who must have been very small boys, executed a grotesque dance around the effigy. They squatted very low with hips thrust back and chest thrust forward and made clawing gestures at the effigy, and then sprang from this squatting position as high into the air as they could. Next they circled around the courtyard, making rushes at the children on the outskirts pretending to frighten them (and actually succeeding).

While the ghouls were still dancing, there entered a Lama with long robes below, but whose head was covered with a stag head mask. He performed one of the most remarkable bits of pantomimic dancing. The ghouls brought him to the effigy before which he knelt, and then they put a sword in his hands, which he handled as if his hands were hoofs and therefore fingerless. He had to perform a mystic gesture spoken of as the gesture of the three over the effigy with the sword. He did it with such a weird rolling of his head, and with such realistic heaving of the chest that in broad daylight he made cold chills run up and down my spine. Finally he brought himself up to the point of necessary courage to chop the effigy to pieces.

A hawk-headed character now joined the stag, and they performed a duet dance of extreme rapidity, with turns technically correct from a Russian ballet standpoint. The turns were not only pirouettes in place, but progressive turns encircling the courtyard, and turns in the air. Soon these two dancers were joined by many other animal headed Lamas and the dance grew wilder. Eventually other characters entered this finale: The King of the Ogres (Yeshe Gon-po) as the God of Death; Mahakala, with dark face and three eyes; Lha-mo Mag-zor-

ma, consort of Mahakala with blue face; Tse-ma-ra, the red faced one; "Lang," the bull headed ogre; and the tiger, the lion, the roc, the monkey and the stag, and the "Sadak," the earth master demons. All of these joined in goring and trampling the remains of the effigy of the enemy of Buddhism in Tibet. This ended the whole ritual dance.

General Laden La had tea served in the courtyard, and talked to me a long time, politely answering my questions about other forms of Tibetan dancing.

And at other times of the year, he said, other dances were done. The one of chief interest, aside from this most important one I had seen, was one which lasts eight days at the New Year, called "Choge Nam-thar," in which two main characters enact the life and works of a good man and a bad man—practically a great morality play, except that there is nothing spoken, it is all done by means of dances and pantomime. He also spoke of folk-dancing in Tibet which is very general and into which the characters of the devil dancers often come. The general characteristics of the steps are the same in all of the dancing.

The manager of the Mount Everest Hotel told me that he was in touch with a troupe of "devil dancers" who had been to the British Empire Exhibit at Wembly, and later had danced at the Exposition des Arts Decoratifs in Paris in 1925. So I arranged to have the troupe come to the hotel to dance for me.

At three the following morning, I arose and, warmly dressed, set out on horseback to Tiger Hill, six miles away (altitude 8,500 feet) to see the sunrise. This experience is one that defies all possibilities of description. After riding in the moonlit night, over roads which wound along precipitous mountain sides, we arrived at the specially high place from which the best view is obtained. There the guides made coffee, and we went on the rooftop to wait. Soon the sun rose, and

there was revealed, apparently floating in the sky, Mount Everest and Kichingungo, the two highest mountains in the world, snow covered and drenched with rose-colour from the rising sun. We watched breathless, this seeming vision of another world, for a half hour until the mists rose from the valleys and the apparition vanished. As I rode back through the early morning, I saw great magnolia trees covered with huge pink blossoms, starring the dark pine clad hills.

After breakfast and hot baths, we went out on the tennis court of the hotel where the second specially arranged performance was staged. These dances were secular, performed largely for entertainment, and derived from the original pagan sources without any altering influence of the Buddhist Lamas. There was much more comedy and much more development of stunts into acrobatic achievement. Most of the dancers were masked, although some wore only elaborate head dresses. Although the dancers were all men, some of the characters were female, one of them being merely that of a rich Tibetan woman (whose costume is very elaborate).

The first dancers wore flat masks, black and white striped jackets, baggy maroon trousers, bound tight around the ankles and calf of the leg, and over skirts of rope fringe, the end of each rope being a huge ball of grey fur. There were four of these men, who each danced singly and finally in an ensemble. Their dance consisted largely in fast turning steps of several kinds, generally ending with a menage of capriole turns in air —that particular turn which to my mind no one does so delightfully as Valodia Vestoff. But when four of these men got going at once around the tennis court it was less a dancing exhibit than a vaudeville act after the manner of the "whirling Arabs." The accompanying music was for the most part drums, although several small horns joined in now and then.

Four other men dressed as girls came on and joined the original four in a dance of the folk dance type—advancing

three steps toward a partner, lifting the foot forward on the fourth count and retreating three steps and lifting, then turning to the right and repeating and turning to the left and repeating. This was accomplished by the most strident singing. The Tibetan voice production is evidently greatly influenced by those ten-foot bronze horns; it is a sound which I never before heard issue from a human throat, nor do I wish to again.

Then followed some comedy dances. Two men inside of a comic lion's body were front feet and hind feet rspectively. A small boy jester annoyed the lion who chased the small boy, rested, bit fleas in his tail, and rolled over. A huge peacock, with a neck some ten feet long, came out and after some rather amusing whirlings and pantomime with the jester, squatted down, and then backed away revealing an egg of bantam proportions which had presumably just been laid. An ensemble in ogre, devil and animal masks was the finale, in which very fast whirling without any idea furnished the major portion of the movement. The technique and style of these dancers was much less individual than that of the Lama dancers—they had either been influenced by their stay in Europe, or had developed from the same root source with the same motives (stunts for the sake of stunts) into a style which floods the stage of our own vaudeville and musical comedy stages. The costuming was unusual and true, and while grotesque had some aesthetic value in that it contained the germs of many ideas which could be profitably developed. The Lamas, however, had a sincerity and a lack of professionalism in their dances, which, combined with the definitely religious themes, produced a dance performance which was worth the discomfort of the long hard journey.

Chapter X

HINDU TEMPLE DANCES

The searching creative religious impulse and the institution of the church, in whatever land or race, have always been at cross purposes. And I find that, where the religious impulse is fresh and strong, it expresses itself through the dance; and that, where religion has become crystallized into set forms, the original dance expression of that religion has atrophied or perished altogether.

It was my good fortune to see a rare and unforgettable example of the religious impulse expressed through dance in a direct and vital way in the Temple of Kali in Calcutta. The Kali Ghat is at best a gruesome place in Western eyes. The blood of sacrificed goats, the rows and rows of diseased beggars displaying leprosy and elephantiasis as an appeal for "Baksheesh," the proximity of the burning ghat where the Hindus cremate their dead, and the black, terrible face of the goddess herself, all combine to give one something to dream uneasily about on dark and lonely nights.

Having a free Sunday evening in Calcutta, I drove with an American friend to see the Kali Temple by night. We found it almost completely deserted. It was late, and the beggars, huddled in their scant and filthy rags, were sleeping fitfully in every corner. Pilgrims and worshippers come mostly in the daytime, and we met only a stray priest or two.

Kali, the wife of Siva, is called the Goddess of Destruction. She is represented with a black face, tongue protruding, and with a necklace of severed human heads. I have listened to

many interpretations of Kali by Hindu and European friends, but I am as far from understanding her as ever. Certainly the image of her presented in the great Kali Temple at Calcutta is one designed to strike terror into any heart.

Two priests sat in front of the image, which was lighted with many candles, and occasionally struck a bronze bell. Opposite the shrine and separated by a foot passage a yard wide, was a platform pavilion about twenty feet square, and raised from the ground about three feet. It had a marble mosaic floor, and a roof supported by pillars, but no walls. It was lighted solely by the candles of the shrine, and the black face of the Goddess dominated the scene.

As we approached through the deserted temple courtyard, we heard music playing—a native orchestra of drums, stringed instruments and finger cymbals. We came nearer, and found that in the pavilion there was a dancer who had been performing for some time an expression of his or her own need for worship. The figure was wrapped in orange colored cloth in the manner of a woman's saree, but the body was so gaunt and the breast so flat, that it might easily have been a man. And save for the priests tending the image, the orchestra of five, the dancer, and ourselves, there was no one there at all.

When we first caught sight of the dancer, she was kneeling with her forehead on the ground and hands spread out in a gesture of complete surrender. The orchestra clustered about her, crouching close. She slowly raised her head which was covered by the drapery, the body pulsing with a vibration almost mechanical. Then she lifted the saree from her eyes and dared to look into the face of the dread Goddess—but, as if the vision were too overpowering, the dancer shuddered, dropped the veil again over her face and with her hands seemed to ward off or protect herself from the thing she saw. Then she rose, and the orchestra rose with her and withdrew six or seven steps so as to give her dancing space. As she lifted herself the shud-

dering of her whole body was like a convulsion, sustained beyond normal human endurance. The body was bent backward, the front leg straight, the back leg bent, and the arms outstretched. Then she began to progress with one of the simplest Nautch steps, like a ballet chassé, toward the image, and receded covering her eyes again with the head drapery, then once more toward the Goddess lifting the veil and peering fearfully, and once more retreating; finally she burst into a rapid whirl, one foot flat and beating the time, her orange saree floating out around her, and then abruptly dropped in one motion to the kneeling posture in which we first saw her, forehead and hands on the floor in front of her.

We stood fascinated while this ceremony was repeated over and over again. We must have stayed an hour, and its intensity was never relaxed—the dancer shaken and possessed by some tremendous inner force, the orchestra gathering close about the prostrate figure, and spreading out for the dancing movements, the priests intent, now and then intoning the bell in the shrine. None of the participants was even conscious of our presence and, as we went away, the sound of the music, continuous and unbroken, followed us as far as we could hear, probably to go on until dawn.

Here was some low caste, illiterate soul, in whom the religious impulse had come to a great flowering. In our own old revival days, it would have been called a conversion, or giving one's self to God. Kali is the deity of the lower classes, and so when the great moment in this humble worker's life came, she (or he) came to the temple, accompanied by such friends as could play the simple instruments, and there prayed that Kali, Goddess of Destruction, would destroy all the evil in her soul. And her prayer was in the form of a dance. This was dancing as I had dreamed it could be—and had hoped once in my life to see. I went away more impressed than by any cathedral, more thrilled than by any premiere danseuse in a great opera house—

for here I had truly seen a genuine bit of the Dance of Life.

It was with eager interest that I turned toward the south of India, where Hinduism is in its greatest strength, after my many months in northern India, where Mohammedanism is in power. I had been in correspondence for some time with Mr. Krishnaswami Rao, a professor in the University at Bangalore, and a lecturer on art. Mr. Rao has made a life long study of the history of dancing, and particularly of Hindu dancing. Bangalore is the capital of Mysore, one of the largest and most powerful of Hindu native states. We were booked to play at Bangalore, but, because of an especially urgent invitation, we went instead to Secunderabad, the capital of Hyderabad, where the Nizam of Hyderabad and his court attended our performance every night for five nights. But that is another story.

After Secunderabad, we went to Madras, and Mr. Rao made the journey from Bangalore to Madras to attend our season. There we spent many pleasant, and, for me at least, profitable hours, discussing the dance of both East and West. Mr. Rao has been compiling a book which I assured him will find, when it is published, eager welcome in America, for it covers a field now almost totally untouched. He has made a deep and genuine research into the manuscripts and temple carvings and paintings, and has a wealth of material about the actual technique and gesture of the ancient religious dances of the devadassis. A small hint of what this portion of his book will be like can be gained from Ananda Coomaraswamy's "Mirror of Gesture" which gives only a fragmentary knowledge of what Mr. Rao hopes to present in its entirety. The book will also contain direct and modern observations from living dancers and teachers concerning the vocabulary of steps, postures and gestures.

From my own observation, and from my talks with Mr. Rao, I found that the dancing in the temples and in the religious

processions is no longer truly religious dancing. Upon special occasions the girls who are attached to the temple perform dances, but they are formalized and indistinguishable in steps, gestures and manner from the secular Nautch dancing used for sheer entertainment. Frequently they are positively obscene. This is particularly so in the processions where the great cars containing an idol are paraded through the streets of some remote Hindu village. Everyone is familiar with the phrase "The Car of Juggernaut." This car is the huge one used in the processions which emanate from the Jaggenath Temple at Puri. Nearly all of the great Hindu temples have these gigantic cars sometimes as high as a five-story building, covered with grotesque carvings, and designed to carry the image of the temple god through the streets. These processions have the devadassis dancing either before, or actually on, the car.

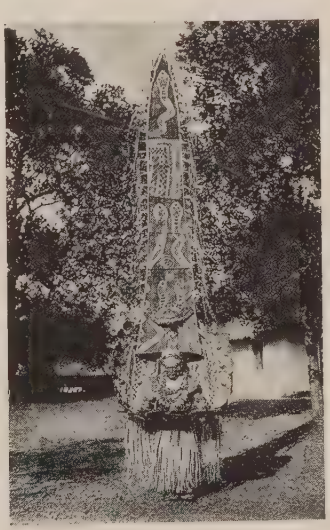
I saw a genuine present day devadassi dance in Madura, that great temple city of Southern India, in which one temple covers twenty-seven acres of ground with its various shrines, tanks, corridors, and bazaars. This temple presents the most marvelous picture of unadulterated Hinduism—it annihilates time and takes one back a thousand years, for there the ceremonies go on unchanged since that time, with bloody sacrifice, with images covered with butter thrown by worshippers, with sacred cows wandering all about, with lingam worship—all that one reads about.

In one of the buildings connected with this Madura temple, we were given a special performance, in which the most famous of the temple dancers danced for us, for several hours. Her name was Kamalambal, and she was by far the most attractive and technically the best dancer we saw in India. She had vivacity, variety of gesture, personality, and the manner of an artist sincerely interested in her work, which was a great contrast to the utterly bored manner of the Mohammedan Nautch girls of the North. The dress of the Hindu dancer is also very

A Hindu religious festival car

A group of deva-dassis—temple dancing girls

A dance performed with spikes driven through the body



A devil dancer of Malabar with sky-scraper headdress

different from the Mohammedan Nautch dancer. And the Hindus, by the way, say that the Mohammedan dancing is done for commercial purposes only, and is therefore only a base imitation of Hindu dancing. Miss Kamalambal was dressed in a wine-colored and gold cloth saree, wound about her in the usual manner, save that the end instead of going over her head was brought tightly over the shoulder, around the waist and tucked in. The saree was further fastened by a solid metal belt, from which depended a fringe of silver bells. Her hair was profusely ornamented, a gold fringe on the front of the hair, large gold and jewelled plaques on the top of the head, and even the long braid which hung to her waist was covered with a false braid made of interwoven gold pieces. She was decidedly plump, and the winding of the saree around her waist nearly doubled her already generous proportions.

In the long performance of Kamalambal, there was not one thing which seemed to proceed from a truly religious theme. The dances were all story dances—a rhythmic theme or pattern was established by the orchestra and paralleled by a foot beating, which was carried on all through what seemed to be a verse and chorus. But the story was told by conventionalized gestures and hand positions.

One Hindu pandit, in discussing the religious dancing with me, explained that all these themes which seem purely secular, and which deal with the little trivialities of flirtation and love-making, and even erotic passion, have really an inner esoteric meaning. He drew the analogy between these love dance themes and the book in our Bible, "The Song of Solomon." One can read this book in the light of the most glorious erotic poetry, or he can take the interpretation placed upon it by those who compiled the English Bible, wherein such a statement as "His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should embrace me. I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor wake my love, until he please" is

found under the chapter heading: "The Love of the Church for Christ."

However, the practical result is that religious dancing among the Hindus is dying, dying of dry rot. Examples such as I saw in the Temple of Kali still exist, but they are the spontaneous expression of one individual's own personal experience who pours out his soul through the dance. The formalized institutionalized dancing has become trivial, inartistic and even worse. That the condition of temple dancing has been bad for over a century, we have on the authority of Abbé Dubois, whose book, "Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies," was written first in French in 1823, editions of the English translation of this work still being published and sold to-day. He is accepted as the greatest authority on the subject for the period in which he wrote, although the Hindus themselves, many of them, resent the attitude with which he treated many of the themes. However, over a century ago, this man, who had lived forty years in Southern India, wrote:

The courtesans or dancing girls attached to each temple take their places in the second rank (of temple attendants): they are called deva-dassis (servants or slaves of the gods) but the public calls them by the more vulgar name of prostitutes. And in fact they are bound by their profession to grant their favors, if such they be, to anybody demanding them in return for ready money. It appears that at first they were reserved exclusively for the enjoyment of Brahmins. And these lewd women who make a public traffic of their charms, are consecrated in a special manner to the worship of the divinities of India. Every temple of importance has in its service a band of eight, twelve or more. Their official duties consist of dancing and singing in the temple twice a day, morning and evening, and also at public ceremonies. The first, they execute with sufficient grace, although their attitudes are lascivious and their gestures indecorous.

These women are also present at marriages and other solemn

family meetings. All the time which they have to spare in the intervals of the various ceremonies is devoted to infinitely more shameful practices, and it is not an uncommon thing to see even the sacred temples converted into mere brothels. The courtesans are the only women in India who enjoy the privilege of learning to read, to dance and to sing. A well-bred and respectable woman for this reason blushes to acquire any one of these accomplishments.

To this paragraph is appended a footnote by the editor of the 1924 edition in which he says:

In these days of female education, the prejudice which existed no longer applies to women learning to read and sing, though dancing is still restricted to the professional dancing girls, and is not considered respectable.

Mr. Krishnaswamy Rao is deeply and seriously interested in the revival of the art of dancing in India. He felt that the influence of the Denishawn Dancers would be great, as it had demonstrated to the thinking and educated Hindus that fine dancing can emanate only from people of education, refinement and high ideals; and furthermore that the great art of dancing is a worthy occupation for the highest of the land.

Mr. Rao knows all of the great masters of dancing in Mysore, and from them he is getting the traditions which for actually thousands of years have been passed from generation to generation only by demonstration and word of mouth. All of these secrets will be in his book. The finest teachers of dancing in India have all been men, as have also the greatest dancers. But, for obvious reasons, the dancers most popular and most in demand were pretty and attractive young girls. So the master who has treasured a great tradition, and has an almost inexhaustible wealth of material, passes out small parcels of it to these girls with no brains, no education, but prettiness and charm, to give them just enough grasp of dancing to make them

A temple procession with dancing girls

Mohurrum—the breast beating dance

Hindu children at a dance game

Kamalambal, deva-dassi of Madura temple

pass as performers. But these girls never had more than a fragment; to get the complete art one had to seek the master —always a man. So Mr. Rao has cultivated these old men, and has patiently, year after year, by sympathy and understanding, and himself practicing the art as a pupil, teased from them their dearest secrets.

It is to return to this freer form of dancing that Mr. Rao is working—the present forms are decadent, artistically as well as morally. He himself has seen the best remnants of the old traditions and should know.

Furthermore, religious dancing, other than Hindu exists in Southern India. Hyderabad is under the government of the Nizam who is a Mohammedan ruler, and the population of the state is largely Islamic. Here, as in other Mohammedan countries, is celebrated each year the festival called the Mohurrum. At this time there is much expression of fanaticism in the form of bodily mutilation in honor of some mythical martyrs of early Islam. But one performance, a breast-beating ceremony, is so decidedly rhythmic that it comes almost within the realm of dancing.

Also in Southern India, there are many villages where the people have an animistic belief mixed up with a gross form of Hinduism. In Malabar there is a performance of devil dancing which is very much akin to the Devil Dances of Tibet and also Ceylon. Great masked figures representing nature spirits dance in these pagan religious ceremonies, and these dances are used as magic to cure disease.

At a private pre-view of "The Light of Asia," a beautiful and admirable moving picture produced in India, with only Indians of the best families as actors, depicting the life of the Buddha, Miss Ruth St. Denis and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu were the women speakers on the program which followed the showing of the film itself.

Mrs. Naidu paid the tribute to Miss St. Denis that she had

made clear to India that dancing is a worthy activity for the well born. "I believe firmly," said Mrs. Naidu, "that we shall not have India politically free until there is a renaissance of art, until all our people—high as well as low—dance and sing."

And India need only go back to the sources of her own religion to find ample authority for the highest and best people of the country expressing their finest and noblest emotions through the dance, for every God in the Hindu pantheon is depicted as dancing. What higher activity can human beings find than to imitate and emulate their Gods?

Chapter XI

RHYTHMS OF LIFE IN CEYLON

The early Christian missionaries had their beliefs all done up in very tidy packages—all good emanated from God, all bad was due to the Devil. Therefore when they invaded a foreign mission field, they called these beings whom the heathen venerated, gods, and those beings whom the natives feared, devils. But devil with its association of horns and hoofs, hellfire and brimstone, is a clumsy word to use in connection with the myriad of grotesque figures observed in the religious ritual ceremonies of the Sinhalese. The word "daemon" is supposed to mean a spirit inhabiting some part of nature, and even there, our spelling of "demon" places this being as an attendant upon our own old familiar Father Satan, as a sort of hellish janitor's helper whose job it was to keep the fires hot for sinners.

The Sinhalese to-day are almost entirely Buddhist. Quite obviously, "Devil Dancing" has no connection with the teachings of the Buddha. Where, then, did it come from? This was the question I asked everywhere in Ceylon of the educated and scholarly Sinhalese gentlemen whom I met.

Dr. Andreas Nell, himself a Sinhalese and a Buddhist scholar, stated that the Buddha taught, not a religion, but a code of ethics, and a mode of the conduct of one's life. This was added to the existing animistic cult which had been in power since before the dawn of history, and the two have blithely travelled side by side in a most friendly way ever since.

The Sinhalese claim to have actual historic proof that the present natives are direct descendants of ancestors who migrated

from a province in Northern Bengal, India. This may possibly provide for a connection between the devil dancing in Tibet, which I have previously described. Or the devil dancing may have been taken over by the Bengal colonists from the aboriginal people existing on the island of Ceylon from prehistoric times. There is also a very active devil dancing cult in Malabar, South India, about which I have read and seen many pictures, and of course as one discovers in "The Golden Bough" it appears amongst primitive peoples in many parts of the world.

But to get back to the word "devil," I repeat that that word gives no adequate idea of what is meant by this whole performance of Devil dancing. Masked figures, whose faces are distorted, with bulging eyes and protruding tongues, and wreathed in cobra hoods, represent the spirits who cause disease. There are eighteen diseases—no matter what is ailing, one of the eighteen classifications covers the case. Each disease is caused by an evil spirit. Therefore when a man is ill a dance is arranged in which the dancer wears the mask representing the disease from which the patient is supposed to be suffering, and after dancing about the sick man, he receives propitiating gifts and departs; and it is hoped that the disease goes away with him.

I had seen a splendid film taken by Burton Holmes which I subsequently bought from Mr. Holmes, depicting Sinhalese dancers. Also some eight or ten years ago, Gertrude Hoffman had two Sinhalese dancers with her in vaudeville who performed a stick dance without masks. Both of these dancers seemed pathetically effeminate.

It was with real surprise then that I saw one group of dancers after another in Kandy, the ancient capital of Ceylon, dancing robustly energetically and with one hundred percent masculinity. Here again I come back to my text taken from the old Chinese proverb: "A king can best be judged by the condition

of the dancing in his country during his reign." Ceylon is prosperous, well-governed, at peace with other nations and at peace internally. Heaven has smiled upon the island and it is an earthly paradise. The climate up in the hills is nearly perfect. These are factors that combine to produce a flourishing condition of the dance.

Colombo is a port city, a tourist town. Aside from the natural beauty of the island itself, the city is dull. It impresses one chiefly as miles of jewelry stores trying to sell moonstones to Americans. We visited the native Sinhalese theatre in Colombo, and found a tawdry performance of a Hindu theme, badly costumed and put on with a childishness that was absurd. The dancing was done by a chorus of "Nautch girls" made up of Sinhalese boys ranging from eight to twelve years of age, and a soloist in white lace and "breast plates." All inquiries failed to bring forth anything of better theatrical value in Colombo.

But when, after twelve days, we went into the interior of Ceylon to Kandy, life was just one devil dance after another. We were fortunate beyond our wildest dreams. Twice a year Kandy has big festivals, and we happened in on the best of the two—Wesak, the birthday of the Buddha, which is the same to the Buddhists as Christmas is to us. They, however, accentuate the religious side of the occasion, and from hundreds of miles there is a continuous stream of pilgrims coming to the famous temple of the Tooth (which we could see from our hotel window). Herein is preserved a tooth of the Buddha—the fact that the tooth is about six inches long only serves to increase their devotion to this sacred relic.

The market place, a great green square surrounded by booths and shaded by cocoanut palms, was the actual social center of the town. There one group of dancers and musicians held forth continually throughout the whole four days we were in Kandy.

In Ceylon, dancing belongs especially to the agricultural classes. I saw dancers whose fathers and grandfathers were still

Sinhalese devil dancers before the elephant bearing the Buddha's tooth, Kandy

A dance performed to heal disease in Ceylon

alive and dancing—the training being a family affair, the baby sons following their fathers in the steps of the dances as soon as they can walk.

We got up at six to see early morning processions with special dancers; we climbed to hill-tops to see other groups of dancers supposed to be particularly fine; we hired dancers to come to our own theatre and teach us by the hour, and at night time we saw again still other dancers in the great processions in which the Sacred Tooth was paraded through the streets.

The actual night of Wesak was the greatest procession.

We went to the temple and mixed with the crowd and watched the procession form, and then we followed it for miles. First came men with great torches, iron braziers filled with flaming charcoal held on high poles. Then came men with banners, followed by a numerous band of musicians and dancers. And as if the prehistoric past were unfolding before our eyes, there emerged from the temple gates the sacred elephants, huge beasts, all caparisoned in gold embroidered blankets; the seventh elephant, the largest and most venerated, was the bearer of the Tooth itself. Attendants went ahead and spread the streets before him with lengths of white carpet so that this elephant never put foot on the earth. On his back was a golden shrine, and in the shrine a golden "dagoba" in which was the Tooth. Following the Tooth came a band of the most gorgeous dancers, in costumes covered with plaques of silver and gold, with high and spreading silver headdresses. These dancers never stopped dancing for one instant during the whole procession. At the end of the whole company came a Kandyan chief wearing his impressive gold crown and surrounded by a staff of attendants. It was a scene of Arabian nights splendor—elephants, gold, flaring torches, frenzied dancers, and the insistent throb of drums and shrilling of flutes.

After seeing many bands of dancers, we chose the one which seemed to us the best, and engaged them for morning lessons

of three hours each morning. The technique is unique, has a definite and individual style, and is very difficult to acquire. One of the first and most noticeable characteristics is the constant use of a deep plié in the second position—many of the steps being executed while in this position. Equally important and striking are the intricacy and rapidity of the rhythms. There seems to be endless varieties of rhythms, very complicated, and with many surprises.

The dancers in a group range from two to more than thirty. Most of the formations are done in a flat line facing the audience, advancing and retreating, and all of the dancing is done in unison. This flat line is broken by an occasional circle, the dancers following each other in single file, sometimes around the drummers in the centre. Usually the musicians stand at the sides, and very often dance with the dancers, executing rapid and difficult steps perfectly and never missing a beat of the drums the while. Sometimes the drums are played with the bare and empty hand, and sometimes with a stick or beater in the right hand. An ear-piercing flute, like a Chinese musette, is sometimes present, and often finger cymbals are added—but two drummers are the usual orchestra for the small bands of dancers.

I asked Dr. Nell if dancing was still used to heal sickness in Ceylon, and he assured me that it was. He added that even Sinhalese converted to Christianity, when they met with an illness which did not yield to ordinary dosing, engaged a dance performance on the sly, really relying on this ceremony more than on modern science.

The dances which we saw were unmasked. The dancers were always men and boys, and the costume always after one general pattern. A very full white skirt came to the ankles. At the hips rosettes and streamers of more white goods were added as decoration. Above this was a series of three white ruffles edged in turkey red. The belt itself was a wrapping of bright red

cloth and sometimes elaborate silver ornaments were worn over this cloth belt. The torso was always bare save for a harness of beads and ivory discs woven into a circular, wheel-like pattern. The simplest headdress was a small turban tied so as to leave both ends hanging.

But they were strong and beautifully built men, though much smaller than our American average. They had a sinuous control that was admirable, and they danced as those dance who enjoy dancing to the uttermost. Altogether, it was a very rich and interesting four days in Kandy, and it gave me a surprisingly new estimate of Sinhalese dancing. Coming to Ceylon directly from India, we found the joy and virility of the dancing a pleasant contrast to the colorless, stupid and clumsy dancing of the general line of dancers in India today.

Chapter XII

PUPPET PLAYS OF JAVA

In Java dreams come true. Here, at last, Oriental dancing was even more wonderful and beautiful than our dreams, and royalty was still royal, still had the dignity and magnificence of court ritual though shorn of political power. And for this reason, I cannot tell the narrative of my dance research in Java chronologically, but must plunge into the tale of our most wonderful hours in Java which were spent in the Court of the Sultan of Djocjakarta. Then I will return to things before and after that glorious day, and to more detailed and technical description of dancing of all kinds.

Miss St. Denis and I received invitations to attend a festival in the Court of the Sultan of Djocjakarta, and we were further privileged to bring thirteen of our Denishawn Dancers. This was great good fortune, as a Dutch friend later told me that two officials in the government to his knowledge had been refused when they hinted their desire for invitations. The Sultan was told of our seriousness of purpose, and our special preparation to understand and appreciate the art of dancers, and he knew our standing in the western world. He therefore honored us with invitations which he withheld from people of mere political importance.

It was truly the experience of a lifetime. The performance took place on Sunday morning, August 8th, 1926, in the Kraton. The Kraton is the city-within-a-city which surrounds the actual palace of the Sultan in the city of Djocjakarta. We ourselves were dancing Saturday night in another city, Sema-

rang, some hundred miles away. One of the drawbacks of theatrical life is, to quote Harry Fox, that it takes up your evenings. However, we all arose at four in the morning, got into three huge motor cars, and drove three and a half hours from Semarang to Djocja. There at the hotel we had a much appreciated breakfast, dressed for the court, and drove to the Kraton.

Like the Forbidden City of Peking, the Kraton is a walled enclosure in which live all those who in any way serve the Sultan: his court, the princes of the blood, high officials, their wives and children, clerical force, household servants, musicians and dancers, some eight thousand souls.

After passing through several impressive gateways, we were deposited before the inner gate opposite which was the Guard Pavilion, where the Royal Guard, those not actually on duty, waited, slept and ate—superb, lithe brown men, with beautifully modelled brown torsos, bare and gleaming as if oiled. Each wore a voluminous wrapped skirt, called dodot, a black hat like an inverted pail, and carried a long, impressive and business-like spear.

We passed through the last gate, and came into the inmost enclosure. Distant sounds of heavy music, the soft murmur of thousands of voices fell upon our ears, and the sight which met our eyes drew gasps of amazement and delight. For it seemed as if we were gazing upon a veritable sea of bare shoulders and raven black hair. As far as eye could see were the women of the Kraton, so closely packed that nothing but their shoulders and heads were visible. To reach the royal pavilion, we went along a roped-off path between solid walls of the women and children, whose station was such that while they were allowed to attend the performance, they were placed at such a distance that only occasional glimpses rewarded their patience and endurance.

The performance was well under way when we arrived. It was hard for us to go through the necessary formalities, for

Serimpi dancing before the Sultan of Djockjakarta

A dramatic moment in the wayang orang

A group of masked dancers of Java

A make-believe prince and his retinue

instantly our eyes were drawn to the dancing space where sixty men, gorgeously costumed, were going through movements of a fascinating dance, virile, technically difficult and complex, in perfect unison and accompanied by the most ravishing music in the world.

We were met by Mr. Sitsen, Secretary of the Kunstkring or Art Circle of Djocja, who presented us to the Sultan, a charming, dignified and very handsome man in smart European clothes, but with a closely wound white and gold turban. He shook hands with all fifteen of us most cordially and we were given seats facing the dancing space, which was a marble tiled floor between the royal pavilion and the orchestra pavilion.

The Sultan and the royal family sat on a raised dais in the center of the golden pavilion—behind him the princesses of the blood—slender brown-skinned, batik-skirted ladies. Celestial blue or violet silk tight-fitting jackets covered the upper part of their bodies; their hair was exquisitely coiffed, their jewelry in good taste, very sparingly used but very costly. The only thing which marred their beauty to our eyes was their ancient custom of blackening their teeth—yes, black, like polished ebony! On both sides of the Sultan, on a lower level, were the guests, mostly high officials in the Dutch Government and their wives, an English painter, an Australian composer, and ourselves. When the Resident arrived, he sat beside the Sultan. Opposite, beyond the dancing space, was another pavilion, the architectural twin of the one in which we sat. In the centre of this was the gamelan orchestra (of which a full description later), on one side the high Javanese court officials, and on the other side the princes of the blood. Just outside the pavilion on both sides sat the Sultan's body guard.

The Sultan's dais was covered by a red velvet carpet, which was thickly strewn with rose and jasmine petals. Before him knelt a slave bearing a gold tray with cigarettes and a flame. When the Sultan rose to greet newly arrived guests, or changed

A Bejojo dancer

The Sultan of Djockjakarta and his queen

Kodrad and a pupil in a duet dance

A Javanese actor

his position, this slave moved rapidly and gracefully along the ground on his knees. Other servants in subdued brown batik skirts called kains, white and gold jackets, moved among us serving cold drinks.

The performance (a special one given only every three years), was a dance-drama, which is called by the Javanese, Wayang Wong, or Wayang Orang, and except for the Japanese dancing, it represents the pinnacle of the art of dancing in the Orient. It is so finished, so perfect, so mellowed by age and tradition, the dancers so exquisite physically through centuries of breeding for type—that one sighs as before Greek sculpture "It is finished—it is perfection—it is complete—nothing can be added to make it lovelier—no one living in the world could ever do it so well."

Here I interrupt the narrative to give some actual information about the Wayang Wong itself. Much has been printed about this native dramatic art of the Javanese—but mostly in Malay and Dutch. However, there is a monograph in English by G. G. Van der Kop, of which the following facts are a condensation:

The Wayang Wong is performed by human actor-dancers, and in this form is derived from the much more ancient Wayang Purwa, or shadow-puppet play. The subject matter of both (as well as the Wayang Golek in which visible wooden dolls are used) deals with the legends contained in the great East Indian epic poem—the Mahabarata—the hero is Arjuna, and the action consists of the struggles between two opposed clans, the Pandawas and the Kurawas. This is so complicated and lengthy that it takes five or six days, each performance six hours long, to present it all. There are hundreds of characters in these plays, each with its traditional costume, mask and properties which every Javanese child knows and recognizes whether he sees the flat two-dimensional puppet, the wooden doll, or a picture of a human actor. Other Wayangs deal with episodes

A Javanese shadow puppet drama with gamelan orchestra

of ancient Javanese history, but these are rare and not so popular as the Mahabarata cycle.

The Wayang Orang, with human actors, dates back only to the middle of the eighteenth century and is still considered an innovation of doubtful value by the custom-loving Javanese. But in the movements and costumes of these actors is easily seen the shadow-puppet origin. The costumes are carefully copied from the flat puppets, which are made of buffalo hide, pierced and painted with great artistry, and also the postures and gestures of the human actors are as like those of the puppets as is humanly possible. They stand in profile most of the time, a sturdy and fixed standing posture suggesting the immovable base of the dolls—and the gestures of the arms giving the feeling that at elbow and shoulder they are actually pin-hinged. Dancing and acting are one and inseparable and much more use is made of rhythmic and expressive movement than is made of words.

In the shadow play, a dalang (story teller), provides all the vocal part of the drama. The puppets are held up between a light and a screen and are made to enact the drama. The orchestra is behind the screen and the public supposedly on the other side. But frequently the crowd is such that they sit on

both sides and enjoy themselves equally whether they see the shadow, or the puppet itself being manipulated by the puppeteer.

In the Wayang Wong, the dalang who now sits in the orchestra, still supplies much of the story, although the actors do actually speak for themselves. Their dialogue is generally very short and is followed by a much longer period of dancing to re-express the same thoughts or feelings. And many actual dances (as we understand and use the word in the West) are interpolated into the progress of the drama.

The cast of characters portray the various members of the royal families of the Pandawas or Kurawas, warriors, the Great Gods, the Lesser Gods and demons. It was a dance of sixty Lesser Gods which was going on as we entered the Kraton. Later one group of demons was played by actual dwarfs, hunchbacks, albinos, midgets who in daily life are the court jesters. During one big dance number they provided an antiphonal chorus of singing and hand-clapping which augmented the gamelan orchestra in a most intriguing manner.

In the court at Djocja all the women's parts are played by men. In travelling companies actual women perform. We also saw the finest travelling company at a big fair in Soerabaya in which the women's parts were taken by women. The travelling company, while it was splendid to us who had seen nothing like it before, we realized later was lesser in every way than the glorious production which we saw in the Kraton. There, when a battle was indicated in the manuscript, two real armies advanced upon each other, and in perfect rhythm, conventionalized gesture, and Tiller-like unison, *danced* a battle. The effect was, to say the least, breath-taking!

The dance training at Djocja is under the patronage of the Sultan who as a younger man was himself an adept in the art. The teachers are younger brothers of the Sultan, and once a year a Wayang is given in which only those of royal

blood take part. I was told that there are two schools of thought represented in the training of the dancers—two methods or mediums, so to speak—The Strong and the Fine. The Strong dancing is that done with big gestures, great force and breadth; the Fine reduces all movements to a minimum, and uses subtlety and suggestion rather than actuality. It is intensely interesting to see the same dance performed first in one method and then the other. The Strong method is the more obviously effective, and for the general public the more satisfactory; the Fine method is for the connoisseur and the cultured dance lover.

At the fair in Soerabaya, besides the main Javanese theatre where we saw the Bedjojos and the Wayang, there were many other smaller booths and platforms on which dancers from the various parts of the Dutch East Indies were performing. A group of boys from the island of Madoera were dancing much in the manner of the street Nautch dancers of India—but not in female garb. A group of girl dancers, musicians and comedians from the island of Bali held an audience spellbound. And there were groups of dancers and musicians from each island and regency showing the native steps peculiar to each locality.

In Weltevreden, I heard each night in the distance the throbbing of drums and the liquid tones of the gamelan, and finally followed the sounds to their source in an amusement park attended only by natives. Here I saw several folk dances of Western Java, as well as what passes for social dancing amongst the Javanese.

Early in the evening three small orchestras assembled into a square of beaten earth, surrounded by low roofed buildings on three sides and on the fourth by tropic trees whose roots ran along the ground like writhing snakes. In each orchestra were a small set of gongs, a strange and beautifully shaped stringed instrument (the "rebab") and a long drum.

Pretty girls in batik sarongs, velvet bodices and brilliant scarves, after powdering their faces and leisurely putting finishing touches to their toilettes, gathered around the orchestras —seven girls to each—and then formed in a line facing the orchestra. One girl of each group began to sing in a high-pitched, wailing voice and the whole group commenced a slow and sedate dance after the style of the Bedjojos. This was in no way exciting and only started the evening's entertainment. After the girl's dance was over, three boys joined each group and danced to a livelier tempo. Their sarongs were pulled up about their hips, and their movement being freer than the girls,' they achieved considerable acrobatic dancing—the girls' feet never left the floor at any time during their dance. The boys seemed to improvise as they danced and displayed great ingenuity and inventiveness—falling back in moments of lack of inspiration upon a stock step which resembled the trouser-hitching movement in the Sailor's Hornpipe. Later, young men of the town, out for pleasure, paid money and joined the dancers. Each young man was allowed to choose a girl and dance opposite her, but must never touch her. And whereas the girls looked a little bored, and danced with the minimum of physical effort, the boys seemed to be having the time of their lives leaping and whirling with tremendous force and joyousness.

In all my memories of Javanese dancing, the movement and the music are inseparable. The gamelan orchestra is unique in the world of music. If I were to imagine music in heaven, this is what would seem most celestial to me. It is so liquid, mellow, haunting. It is like the sound of a cool brook running over stones through a shady wood. And this music flows and ripples swiftly along, whereas the movement of the dance is the slowest bodily movement I have ever seen except that of the Noh dances in Japan.

After seeing the dancers in the court at Djocja, I was again

impressed with the fine examples of humanity that are bred by a serious interest in the dance as a great art. Wherever dancing is held in high esteem, and wherever the great dancers of a land are its honored citizens—these dancers are unfailingly men worthy to the utmost of the homage that is paid them. The nobility of Koshiro Matsumoto in Japan, the aristocratic and spiritual fineness of Mei Lan-fang in China, the quivering, thoroughbred virility of Po Sein in Burma, all give examples that the lesser men of those countries might well follow. In Java the art of the dance represents all that is finest and best in that people. Here is a land that beckons me to return, for here the art of the dance is as it should be. The dancers have great physical beauty, they are marvellously trained to a physical control that is the highest ideal of achievement, they have exquisite beauty of costume, nobility of surroundings, and the accompaniment of truly divine music. And here especially, where the art of the dance is honored, protected and assiduously cultivated, it has produced a high and noble type of humanity in its dancers. The dance in Java has had a religious origin, and is still revered as a divine activity. It is considered the most suitable profession for the highest men and women in the realm. It is no wonder, then, that we give our sincere homage to Javanese dancing for there nobility must prove itself noble through perfection in a noble art.

Chapter XIII

THE ROYAL CAMBODIAN BALLET

A Paris critic who saw the dancers from the court of S. M. Sisowath, King of Cambodia, when they were at the Paris Opera, spoke of this dancing as "the divertissement of goddesses" and said only a cinema could adequately describe this performance—words could not tell one who had not seen the dancing what it was like.

I have had in my possession for many years a remarkable book, however, which attempted this very thing—to describe completely the Cambodian dancing. It is called "Danseuses Cambodgiennes" and is by George Groslier, a Frenchman and an artist who lived many years in the court of Pnom-Penh and had complete and cordial coöperation in his great work from the King himself. The result is a book, beautifully printed, exquisitely illustrated by the author, and exhaustive as to every detail of the life, environment, training and technique of these extraordinary dancers. A book reviewer (I think it was in Theatre Arts Monthly) complains that with all the detail, somehow the reader fails to conjure up the actual performance. Mr. Groslier, who is now director of the Government Art School and Museum at Pnom-Penh, is of course, not a dancer. I wondered if it were possible for a dancer to succeed where this man had failed.

After Java, my next objective was to see these Cambodian dancers in their own court, especially since that would practically complete the important types of Oriental dancing in my tour of research. The Cambodian, while developed from the

Dancers of the Royal Cambodian ballet

Siamese, is a more perfect expression of the style and most worthwhile to see. The journey was far from easy. We took a crowded and unpleasant French boat at Singapore and travelled two days to Saigon where we struck such heat as in all the Orient, even on the actual Equator, we had never known before. At first, it looked as if our quest was in vain, for the American Consul, who was making arrangements for us, said that the king's birthday was the following Saturday, the day we were scheduled to sail and that not even a rehearsal could be witnessed because the palace was being decorated, new costumes fitted and everything was in turmoil. However, we gave four evening performances in the magnificent Municipal Theatre in Saigon to an audience of stupid French Colonials and cultured Annamites, and then *mirabile dictu*, without any intervention from us, it was announced that the boat would sail a day later!

Thus, by arising at four in the morning of August 28th, driving by motor six and one-half hours from Saigon, across three big rivers where the automobile was ferried over on a small barge by men with poles, we reached Pnom-Penh. We

spent the day in the Museum, there observing the art and architecture of the people, and purchasing costumes, and photographs of dancers. Then, after an early dinner, we proceeded to the Palace of the King of Cambodia. It was an Oriental fairyland. The architecture is so slight and exquisitely graceful; tall slender spires rise above each palace and pavilion, and the end of each gable turns upward and finishes like the long fingernail of some ancient mandarin. Some of the buildings were covered with silver and gold, others with turquoise and yellow porcelain tiles.

As we came through the main gate, display fireworks were going off on all sides—sky-rockets, pin wheels, fountains, Roman candles.

We had invitations for the king's reception which took place before the ritual dancing, but we thought best to get to the dancing pavilion early that we might secure good seats.

The Hall of the Dance is a separate structure within the walls which enclosed all the royal buildings. It has a flight of about a dozen steps leading up to it from four sides, and the floor itself is at least eight feet or more above the level of the ground. The building is only a roof supported by pillars, all sides being open to the air.

The dancing floor is the centre of the oblong building, and the audience sits practically all around it. One end is nearly filled by the orchestra, the centre of one side is the king's box, the centre of the opposite side is occupied by a women's chorus who chant and hit wooden strikers together to make certain important beats, and the other end has painted scenery across it, erected temporarily for the dancing performances, and, through curtained doorways of this scenery, the dancers make their appearances.

We arrived early enough to have our pick of seats and chose front row seats at the best angle. The curtains of the scenic doors were pulled aside and we were able to see the dancers

A dancer in male costume and a dancer in female costume

putting the last touches to their make-up, and donning their high pointed headdresses. Then gradually the orchestra began to assemble. The orchestra had a great deal in common with the Burmese orchestra, which also has been derived from the Siamese. There were two circular railings which supported sets of gongs tuned to make a scale. There were two instruments like a xylophone with wooden bars, and two others with metal bars. There was one large drum tuned with rice paste in the Burmese manner, and one other drum which had a loosely strung sound. A very reedy flute completed the orchestra proper.

At both ends of the dancing space, a green lacquered, table-like bed was placed, covered with a crimson and gold brocaded cloth and a pillow of the same material. Certain ritual postures were to be performed on these.

The orchestra played an overture. Unlike the Burmese, it

was a fixed, steady, rapid and unvarying rhythm. It flowed on like a mighty river, upon which boats of melody plied to and fro without ever affecting the current beneath.

Then with a sudden change of tempo and rhythmic pattern, the orchestra gave the cue for the entrance of the dancers, and, before we realized what was happening, the floor was filled with dancers. They were like live jewels frosted with gold. Vibrant, rich and satisfying color, the fire of priceless jewels, the overpowering scent of jasmine and champak blossoms which hung in tassels from their crowns, and were woven into bracelets for their arms. Twenty exquisitely beautiful girls, half of them dressed as princesses and half as princes, danced in two long lines down the floor. As I watched, I realized why no words, written or spoken could ever recreate this scene, for a simultaneous attack was made through all the senses at once —even the moving picture, perfectly synchronized with the perfectly recorded music, would still be unable to give the caress of the tropic breeze which bore the heavy scented perfumes of musk and jasmine.

A charming dance figure was worked out between the masked villain, the beautiful princess and the ensemble. The princess had a blue crystal ball, symbol of something which the villain wished to take from her. In a most formal figure the pursuit was carried on. The ensemble was arranged in a line of pairs down the centre of the stage; the villain facing the whole line from the head, and the princess hiding behind the first couple. With rhythmic beating of the feet, almost like a simple Nautch step, the villain approached the first couple and formally parted them to get at the princess. The parted couple ran outward in wide circles to the edges of the dance floor and let the villain through only to discover that the princess had slipped through and behind the second couple. The figure was then repeated, the separated dancers joining the first couple, the princess slipping behind the third couple

Dancers before the doors of the king's palace at Pnom Penh

A ballet in action in the royal dance pavilion

Cambodian ballet on palace platform

Cambodian orchestra

and so on, until the whole line was separated. This entire figure was repeated with the variation of the villain pushing one couple to one side and the next to the other side instead of separating them; and again making a rush at the whole group and dividing the twenty dancers into two groups of ten which ran apart in two large circles and then came back together, one group striking the hands of the opposite group and all giving a light girlish scream as they struck—but always the princess eluded him. Another pretty movement of pursuit was made by the princess running in alternate half-circles throwing high the blue crystal ball and catching it again at the finish of each run, always in perfect time, the catching of the ball even coming invariably on the same beat of the music.

The entrance of a solo figure began with the plastique on the couch which I have described as standing at each end of the floor. Upon this an obeisance was made, followed by a dance in which the dancer made a series of postures kneeling, sitting, lying on one side, but never standing until the finish, when she rose and stepped from the couch. The first obeisance was done with a hand gesture that was unforgettable. The bases of the hands were put together palm to palm, but the outward curvature of the fingers was such that the hands seemed to form a cup or chalice, as if offering to the king all their homage and all their beauty for him to drink.

When the prince finally won, through many formalized difficulties and struggles, his desired one, a most beautiful duet plastique took place which was a most restrained, chaste and yet satisfying expression of fulfilled desire.

That artistic reserve is a characteristic of all Oriental dances and drama, contrary to popular expectations. Whenever desire or passion is depicted on the stage or in drama-dance performances anywhere in the Orient that I have been, it is portrayed with so much restraint as to be hardly recognizable. Many Oriental gestures, meaning nothing whatsoever to us, have

suggestions of burning love to them, such as on the Japanese stage a posture back to back gently rubbing shoulder blades. Of course, the fact that the Cambodian dancers are all women, and have been so for centuries, has made lovemaking in the dances a thing of symbolism rather than actuality.

The ceaseless and unchanging rhythm of the Cambodian orchestra, flowing like a river on and on, gives or helps to give the sense of monotony to the dancing—but this monotony is only a surface impression, for when one begins to look for variety of steps and gestures one finds more than one expects. Even the feet execute many and varied actual "steps" which escape attention because of the wonder and beauty of the arm and hand movements. Some of these steps are based on the simple and fundamental Nautch step—the "step-close-step-beat" movement. Then again there was a step which was in structure exactly the same as a "corte" in an Argentine tango. The exceptional qualities, some of them positively unique, of this dancing, lie in the bodily positions and the use of the arms and hands, the legs always in plié, sometimes slight, some times deep, the feet well turned out, and the toes curling up especially in walking or running. The head has an almost motionless posture which is induced by the heaviness of the crown. It would come off or be disarranged by any violent movements of the head. The running and walking is done by sliding the feet along the ground swiftly and keeping the upper part of the body perfectly tranquil, giving the impression of floating on the water. When a position similar to a ballet arabesque is taken, it breaks every ballet rule; the toe is turned up, the knee is bent to the limit, the standing knee is bent, and yet there is a great sense of flight.

The real charm, the real essence of this dancing eludes description; the color, gold and jewels of the costume, the perfume of the jasmine blossoms they wear, borne on the warm breezes of the tropic night, the hypnotic rhythm of the gongs

and wooden strikers, the fragile beauty of the dancers, the serpent-supple arms and hands, all combined cannot contain the secret of their power. There is a dignity accumulated through hundreds and hundreds of years, an aristocracy bred by countless generations of court life and adherence to strict and sacred traditions, a tragic evanescence as of a flower which blooms only for a night, to fade at dawn. Even all of these points when thoroughly considered and added to the sum total do not explain the magic quality of these living goddesses.

We were tired beyond any weariness we had ever known. We had driven over rough roads, through infernal heat for seven hours, we had been so cruelly stung by mosquitoes and other insects that our bodies were aflame—we sat in the palace with the steamer rugs wrapped around our legs up to our hips because of the ferocious mosquitoes—and yet we were unconscious of our bodies completely for three hours, and truly were transported into the fairy realm wherein these exquisite creatures unfolded their tales of princesses, hero princes, giants and demons.

Tagore cried in one of his poems, "Who can strain the blue from the sky?" How can I then, strain from these dances of ancient Khmer their adorable perfume, color and rhythm and bring them home to America?

And yet, while we never could duplicate or recreate this dance art exactly, it has many tangible principles which are universal in their application, and thus should be learned and used. If the dancing of any one country is truly great, it must have been founded on principles which are true everywhere, and thus the study of these principles is of value to the dancers of every country. In the study of the dances of every nation and race of the world, I am never concerned with imitation, but with surprising the secret source of their charm and beauty, that I, too, may tap that source, and let the divine essence flow through me, perhaps in new forms, to the world.

Chapter XIV

DANCING ON THE ISLES OF FEAR

My ignorance about the Philippine Islands when I landed at Manila was almost total. For all the other countries of the Orient which we visited I had done more preparatory reading about the people and their customs. To be quite frank—except for the Igorots—the Filipinos had never in any way stimulated my interest, and thus, unpatriotically, I had neglected our own protectorate in the Orient for those other places whose people seemed to be more fascinating, or more talented.

Manila lacked color after Japan, China, India and Java, which is to say it is cleaner, more sanitary, better run than any of the other Oriental cities. But more than that, the natives were not such as to appeal to one's sense of the picturesque as compared to other Orientals. True, the women still wear the huge balloons of mosquito netting for sleeves, with fichu of the same material, and often a black gauze and jet short skirt over a brilliant colored large-patterned dress, long enough to trail on the ground but which is caught up in a drape from the belt. The men, short, slender, fragile chaps, for the most part wear American clothes, and wear them well. The only native touch among the men is the survival of the Malay shirt, bright colored, often with embroidered flowers, and transparent so as to reveal plainly the undershirt beneath. This shirt is worn *outside* the trousers, an ugly style with nothing to recommend it in any way.

Working women—or peasant women—wear an apron and

shoulder handkerchief to match, of broad and brilliant stripes, which was the most attractive spot of color in all the native costuming.

I found it imperative, after being in Manila, to read about these people, and so attacked the public libraries, the bookstores and the literature lent me by friends.

Out of numerous volumes, some pedantic, some partisan and propagandist, I struck one which set me aflame. Katherine Mayo's "The Isles of Fear." And I felt guilty—as an American citizen—that I had been ignorant of the great drama of compelling interest which is even now working its way out on the stage of the Philippine Islands. Before I read the book, Miss St. Denis and I had tiffin with Governor-General and Mrs. Wood at the Malacañan Palace and I had felt the extraordinary power and nobility of this greatest living American. I had expected a great military general, but I found one of the world's elect—with spiritual vision, tenderness, tolerance, understanding, a great teacher who—knowing the nature of children, never is angered when the pupils throw mud, break things, call him fool names—but steadily goes on with his purpose; to make true, fine men out of them. In Katherine Mayo's book, I found full corroboration of my own judgments.

I feel, to understand the rest of this article, a few facts should be set forth, and I can do no better than quote these statistics from "The Isles of Fear" where they are succinctly set forth:

There are in the lot 3,141 islands and islets, of which only about two-thirds are inhabited. Taken altogether, their area about equals Arizona's. One of them, Luzon, is as big as Ohio; another, Mindanao, is as big as Indiana. Of the rest 2,775 measure less than one square mile apiece. They lie in a half-moon, hugging the east coast of Asia. Their latitude is about that of the stretch from the City of Mexico to southern Panama. Their climate varies. In the high mountains of Luzon oaks and pines grow among tree-ferns, and films of ice may form of nights

The "Surtida" danced by young society people of Manila

on standing water; while in Mindanao, even as the glorious sea-breeze blows, a white man's skin starts dripping, night or day, whenever he stirs. Periods of heavy rainfall, alternating with dry periods, form their general changes; to which may be added typhoons in season. Some islands—some localities—are fever holes that eat you alive, and some again are fairly healthful—with which the difference the presence or absence of Uncle Sam has much to do. The majority are beautiful in one way or another, with volcanic peaks or forest stretches, lakes, open plains, or mountain ranges. And they produce sugar, hemp, copra, timber, tobacco, rubber and a few things more.

The native population of the Philippines falls of itself into three perfectly distinct main divisions—the Mountain people of the Island of Luzon, comprising several large and several smaller absolutely distinct peoples commonly but inaccurately classed under a general term as "Igorots," the Mohammedans, or Moros, of the Southern Islands; and the Christian Filipinos. The first and second of these are essentially Malayan, and of the overwhelming majority of the last the same is true.

Since we had landed in Manila—naturally my dance research was first conducted among the Christianized Filipinos.

I found the condition I had expected; the native dances are dying out of general practice in Manila, being kept alive by schools and clubs, much as the English and American folk dance societies maintain an interest in our old dances. In the country regions, as with us in rural parts, Maine, Vermont, the old dances are still actually done by the people.

Through Mr. Andrada and Mr. Jovan, both of the "Philippine Free Press," I was able to see representative performances of all the native Filipino dances—Surtida, Carinosa, Balitao, and others.

Twice at the home of Miss Victoria Lopez, and once at the Philippine Women's College, groups of young men and women danced for us.

Naturally all these dances show a strong Spanish influence. Spain brought to these people their first contact with Western civilization and ruled over them for more than three hundred years. Their dances are thus Filipino dances to the same degree that our "Boston Fancy" is American.

The actual forms, choreography of the dances are peculiar to the Filipinos—and the music composed by Filipinos—but the steps are all to be found among Spanish dances and the rhythms and harmonies of the music are Spanish.

The most elaborate dance was the "Surtida". It was explained that this name was the common or vulgar name, a corruption, and that "A Poem of Philippine Love" is the right title of the dance. It is, as its name implies, a collection and arrangement of many dance themes. Originally each movement or section of this complete dance was a dance in itself, probably the favorite dance of some village or province. Then on the slender theme of the progressive stages of courtship these different dances have been combined into this "Surtida" or assortment of Filipino dances. It is danced by eight couples, and has the general appearance of a Lancers or Quadrille. Each of the seven main divisions is to a different piece of music, and a complete stop is

Miss Victoria Lopez and her brother in movements from the Filipino peasant dance "Carinosa"

made. There is no attempt to modulate or glide from one theme to the other. The music breaks, the dancers seem to "drop character" very much as in Spain they do between the coplas of the Sevillanos. The names of the movements and their significance were given to me as follows:

1. Birgoire—the meeting.
2. Camantugol—an imitation of waves.
3. Tambururay—"She is shy but love is awakened."
4. Haplin—a dance of grace and freedom.
5. Ligui—he declares his love, she says "no" but means "yes."
6. Voluntario—the acceptance.
7. a. Incoy—imitation of drunkenness on tuba, a native drink; b. Estrella—rejoicing; c. Salpumpati—doves fly home.

The music was all in three part time, waltz, or mazurka rhythms, and the actual steps were the simplest of waltz and mazurka steps, all of which were familiar to our first dancing-school years. There was a Spanish flavor to the movement and postures of the body, but none of the Spanish fire and abandon.

The "Carinosa" was a duet dance—of the peasants. When Miss Lopez and her brother danced this for me she changed into the striped peasant overskirt and unbound her hair and the brother wore a strawberry pink gauze shirt which is the gala dress of "Juan de la Cruz."

This dance has many attractive flirtatious movements in it—with fan and with handkerchief—those ancient tools of Eros—and is also danced to a waltz of Spanish mood. It has more variety and charm than the group dances, but remains in the Folk dance class.

At the Philippine Women's College, these same two dances were danced for me and also two others, the "Balitao" and "Rigaudon". The Balitao is a peasant dance which is descriptive of work movements—planting, reaping and winnowing the rice. The girls were dressed in peasant costume, wore straw peasant hats and had on heelless slippers which they kept on their feet during the dance only by a miracle, but the pat-pat of which was an added charm to the dance; mazurka in rhythm.

The Rigaudon is the old-fashioned dance used as we have used a Grand March—to open a formal ball—and was danced by girls and boys dressed as their grandfathers and grandmothers did dress—the men's shirts embroidered marvellously and the women with very full, long trained dresses, and enormous sleeves.

Miss Francesca Reyes, Physical Director of the Philippine Women's College, directed this performance for me, and showed me in manuscript form a book she has written on Filipino Native Folk Dancing to be published by Silver-Burdett and Company which should now be off the press; it is exhaustive, giving music for all these dances and notes on the dances, step by step, and is illustrated.

There is no dance art among the Filipinos at all. They have no native drama or theatre and there is apparently no interest among the people in dancing as an art. In the past, they have depended upon such performances as came over from Spain, and the dancers therein, and the only instruction in stage dancing in Manila is by Spanish teachers.

A peculiar people, individually charming and lovable in the

extreme, but collectively, the Filipino is on a low scale artistically, both in creativeness and appreciation.

General Wood, when he found that we could go to Baguio, which is in the heart of the country inhabited by the pagan tribes, gave orders that dancers from every tribe be assembled there for us to see.

We drove by motor all night long and after dawn we were climbing the mountain roads through scenery of an indescribable beauty. We were received at Camp John Hay by Major Burton Y. Read, aide-de-camp to General Wood and given breakfast which was served by thirteen superb Igorot men, gorgeously and amply garbed in bright red gee-strings. Then we went to a natural arena in the hills and there saw dancing in the most violent contrast to the anaemic and unoriginal dancing of the Filipinos.

Five tribes: Igorots, Bontocs, Ifugaos, Kalingas, Apayaos, had assembled their dancing troups, twenty or more to a group. Lieutenant Edwards, who has had years of experience with these people, loves them and admires them, and has encouraged their dancing performances, acted as master of ceremonies. We witnessed head-hunting dances, war dances, wedding and courtship dances, from first one tribe and then another.

The men were all naked except for their gee-strings, and the attachments of foodbag, bolo belt and ornaments such as the coils of polished brass worn beneath the knees. Their bodies were gloriously proportioned, more beautiful from our standards than any savage or primitive people I have ever seen.

The women were much more clothed—in native woven skirts. They also wore shirts which farther back in their native haunts would be discarded—but were a legal requirement restriction in Baguio itself. The women were squat, badly proportioned and rather stupid of manner. The beauty and intelligence in these tribes seemed to belong exclusively to the masculine sex.

The movement was surprisingly light; they spurned the ground with their feet. Their movement was away from the earth rather than toward it. They never beat the ground; they used their heels hardly at all.

In the war dances two men as antagonists with shields and spears waged mimic battle most realistically, and in the intensity of their drama forgot or refused to be bound by the insistent steady rhythm to which the others were dancing. A group of women with outspread arms, dancing side by side in a line, moved in one direction, while the line of the men-dancer-musicians moved in the oposite direction, all, however, bending their gaze upon the combatants and seeming to encourage them. Three of the men carried brass gongs, called "kangsa," which were in two tones and which they beat antiphonally, and four men carried hard wood sticks which hung from cords and which gave off a musical note when struck.

The wedding dances were done without weapons and the gong beaters who furnished the only rhythm accompaniment did not dance. There were several tribes who danced wedding dances, but none of them had a narrative, dramatic or mimetic form. The men danced together, and the women danced together, and there seemed to be no interplay between the groups. When each of these dances started one man always began to dance alone and established the dance pattern, and then one by one others fell in behind him until the full ensemble was in action. One posture of the arms was used so often that it became almost stereotyped—the right hand flat with upturned palm, the fingers touching the right breast, and the left arm extending toward the center of the circle.

But in one wedding dance all the gong beaters danced and it became almost a Bacchanale. Each had added a large mantle which hung folded over the right shoulder and reached down on both sides to the ankle. It was of broad stripes of brilliant colors and flared out fan-like in the whirling motions. The

A Bontoc war dance at Baguio, P. I.

A Kalinga group dance

leading dancer beat his gong high and low and turning. He was a Malay Dionysus. I have rarely seen such beauty of body, such ecstacy of spirit, such abandon and manly grace of motion.

In an Apayaos courtship dance only one couple danced to an accompaniment of three squatting gong beaters. The girl was as usual the passive and rather uninterested party, the boy was very young, apparently about seventeen years old, and was of very small dimensions, though well proportioned. His dance was obviously patterned after the wooing movements of a fighting cock, that most prized pet of these people. He strutted and pranced and preened himself around the girl and came to a most amusing climax in which lifting both feet together, he pounded and beat the earth like a bantam rooster in the extreme of passionate desire.

A hunting dance gave an ensemble movement, that was a memory to treasure. The theme repeated over and over was imitative of stalking the quarry through the jungle. The men all in a circular line, with bodies very close together, lunged forward almost into fondé position, and as the gongs beat steadily all the bodies pulsed in unison while the position was shifted slowly back until the back leg bore all the weight and the front leg was straight; then another lunge forward on the other foot.

All morning long we gazed our fill and took our own moving and still pictures of these noble primitives. Then we had tiffin with Major Garfinkle, commander of Camp John Hay, and Mrs. Garfinkle. The afternoon we spent in the Baguio markets buying costumes—an assortment of gee-strings, shell necklaces, little basket hats, and coils of wire to be worn just above the calf of the leg.

Major Read was our host for dinner at the Country Club (yes, Baguio, in the heart of the land of the head-hunters, has a Country Club and a very smart one, with both a nine and an eighteen hole golf course) and then afterward the whole dance

An Igorot group dance

Two Shamen and a head-hunter Kenyan player

program of the morning was repeated around a huge, blazing bonfire which gave dramatic lighting, and the necessary atmosphere of fear and darkness which the morning light had lacked.

After midnight we got into the motor, drove eight hours back to Manila just in time to tumble into our suite aboard the S. S. President Madison and sleep almost the whole way to Hongkong.

Of the third main division of the peoples of the Philippine Islands, the Moros, I can give only second hand testimony. At tiffin given us by Colonel Langhorne, one of General Wood's military advisers who has served in the Moro country himself, I received much valuable information. His cousin, Miss Waller, who had just returned from a tour of the Southern Islands, contributed by her account of the glowing color, the intelligence, the high order of artistic achievement displayed by these staunch friends of American government. General Doree, another guest that day, also with a deep knowledge of the Moros, described to me a dramatic solo dance which he had seen on many occasions in which the dancer—a Moro man—portrays in rhythmic movements the hunting for bees in the forest, the seeing of the bee, the tracking of the bee to his nest built in the ground and his attempt to get the honey—in which he is defeated at first by the stinging bees, and how by diligence and strategy he finally succeeds.

General Doree, who loves and admires the Moros, and who is a man of strength, charm and intellectuality became so rapt in his description that quite without self-consciousness he slipped off his shoes and coat, and tied one of the many scarves lying around on his head. One of the company picked up a tom-tom and this Major General in the U. S. Army nearing sixty and a real veteran was performing barefooted the Moro "Bee-hunting Dance." What a feather in my cap in my long defence of dancing as a man's expression.

Katherine Mayo gives us this brief dance scene:

Passing one day through a small Moro village, I came upon a wedding-party. They were holding the ceremonial dance in a tent, and the head man came forward with all eagerness to welcome an American. At the top of the room sat the little bride and her maids, straight and still, with hands extended flat upon their knees, with chalk-white delicately-painted faces, with downcast eyes, immovable as carven goddesses.

Etiquette demands that they see nothing, hear nothing, and seem apart from all earthly concern, some one explained.

But the rest of the party was full of life. Single dancers succeeded each other upon the floor—sometimes a statuesque woman, wrapped in long garments, subtly, rhythmically leading the gongs with her flexing wrists and ankles—sometimes a youth, dramatically dancing a story—sometimes a merry old man, proudly proving the trim of his nerves by balancing a cup of water upon his head while his body capered to the music. And the audience—men, women and little children—in its wild picturesqueness, its constant motion, its vivid interest and applause, made a marvellous background to the picture.

There seems to be no doubt that the Moros have developed the art of dance to a higher point than any other people in the Philippine Islands. Perhaps their close relationship to the Javanese is a part of the explanation of it.

A sincere and scholarly study of the dance among such peoples as the Moros and Igorots in the Philippines would have more than a cultural import. It would bring a consciousness of even the existence of them to thousands of Americans whose interest cannot be reached from any other angle than that of some aspect of the profession they are following. To them and others, inasmuch as the dance is a revelation of not only the culture of a people but of the mainsprings of its collective behaviour, it would contribute to a most important kind of understanding in the uneasy and ominous conditions of our political world to-day.

Chapter XV

DANCING IN NORTH AFRICA

Strangely, America had her first concept of Oriental dancing from the dancers in the "Streets of Cairo" on the Midway Plaisance of the Chicago World's Fair. Yet, to speak correctly, North Africa is not genuinely the Orient. And of the wide variety of dances one can find in Egypt, Tunisia and Algeria, it was the most sensationally immodest dance which the sideshow impresarios of Chicago chose to show us, as having the best box office value.

My personal experience in North Africa was limited to the two states, or provinces, which are under French rule—Tunisia and Algeria.

In Algiers and Tunis, the two big coast cities, I found almost no dancing worthy of the name. Tourists on the Mediterranean cruises who stop off in these cities for one day only, and do not penetrate deeper into the country itself, see a phase of commercialized performance which is as meretricious as the "danse du ventre" side show in the lobby of the Folies Bergere in Paris.

That there is a preponderance of this type of dancing in North Africa, I do not deny, but if one were seriously interested in the art of dancing, and had seen only some of the ballroom dancing in our own country, he would hardly have an idea of what Americans can really do as dancers.

After several days in Algiers—proving to myself that there was nothing of dance value there—I engaged a Delahaye car, with a driver who spoke French and English, and piling my

hand luggage in the back, drove over 1,400 miles in and out of desert towns of Algeria. I had read for years of a tribe called the Ouled Naïls which existed by training its girl children to be professional dancers, whom they sell to the coffee houses of Algiers, Tunis, Setif, Biskra and other cities. To see them at first hand we headed south from Algiers, and that night came into a little town called Bou Saada, where, after a very late dinner, I ventured forth with a native guide and my chauffeur to see the sights. A small group of the women of the Ouled Naïl were in the town for professional purposes, and we arranged for a special performance at about midnight.

I discovered later that while the Ouled Naïl dancers do many different dances, there is one especially named for the tribe—La Danse des Ouled Naïl. This is always a duet of two women, with a fluttering motion of the hands and fingers that I have not seen approached in the dances of any other people. The steps are done to the accompaniment of a shrill clarinet-shaped wooden pipe and tom-toms, in 2-4 time, and are little more than a shuffling of the feet along the floor. There is almost no movement of the body at all. The pattern of the dance consists of the two dancers advancing side by side towards the spectator, then a movement of facing each other, and facing away, repeated several times, then a retreat from the spectator, again side by side, but with backs turned to the audience. All of this time there is the incessant fluttering of the hands in toward the face and away again. The entire pattern of the dance took perhaps one minute, but was repeated again and again. Apparently one bought the dance by the mile.

Still in the same costume, the two women did a Handkerchief Dance, with a different rhythmic musical accompaniment. As to the footwork, it practically duplicated the dance of the Ouled Naïl, the reason for the dance lying in the use of large colored and tinselled handkerchiefs, which depended from their metal belts. There was the beginning of stomach move-

ments in this dance, but in the main the interest was held by the manipulations of the bright-colored squares of silk.

The costume of the Ouled Naïl seems to have been borne out of some French style first introduced into North Africa with the early days of the French conquest. It is ugly in the extreme —a full skirt, not full enough to have the charm of crinolines, with but one ruffle, thereby losing the chance of rivalling the Spanish Gypsy garb with its many ruffles, and looking in general like a "Mother Hubbard" of "circa" 1890. However, even though these dresses are often torn, dirty and poorly hung, there is such a mass of jewelry, tinsel and other ornamentation, that an impression of barbaric splendour is achieved in spite of the incongruous foundation. On the head is worn first, a foundation of fringed and colored handkerchiefs, over which is placed a band of plaques of silver or gold, called a diadem, from which hangs a fringe of coins. The coarse black hair, well oiled, is worn in huge braids on both sides of the face, looped up and partly held in place by enormous earrings. To top this headdress, there is often a hedge of ostrich tips.

When the dancer has pleased her guest, he is supposed to give her a coin, and as she has no other safe place to put her riches, she bores a tiny hole in the coin and sews it to her dress —some of the "Ouled Riches" have a veritable chain mail of money over their dresses. To protect these riches from avaricious "gentlemen friends" they wear huge bracelets, with studs and spikes an inch or two long projecting from them—really murderous looking objects. Generally two of these on each wrist are further augmented by slender silver bands covering the arms to the elbow. I was so enamoured of this bracelet collection on the first Ouled I saw dance, that I insisted on buying the whole lot of them direct from her arms for Miss St. Denis, thereby probably paying five times what I could have got them for after a little shrewd haggling in the bazaars.

A Tunisian dancer

Rue des Ouled Naïls, Biskra

An "Ouled Riche"

The group of dancers at Bou Saada

The costume is further adorned by many charms, holy relics, and quotations from the Koran, which are kept in metal boxes of many shapes, cylindrical, square, triangular, hung around the neck on chains. Strings of coins are hung from one side of the face to the other beneath the chin; the ankles each have two heavy solid bars of silver anklets, and the outer shawl is pinned on with two shoulder pins with ornaments as big as pancake turners. Then truly she may be said to have "everything on but the kitchen stove!"

After several dances in costume, the dancers retired behind a screen, and then came out completely nude, except for headdress and jewelry, to perform the famous "Danse du Ventre" or muscle dance, which is, in its way, remarkable. The control of the various muscles of the body is developed to an extreme degree. Each breast is moved by its own muscles, in alternate directions, one up and the other down, while at the same time the entire abdomen is moving in muscular rotations; the big muscles of the arms, which are held out sideways from the body, are swaying to and fro, the muscles of the legs are contracting and relaxing, all in the strictest time to the throbbing and ear-splitting music. It is not a "suggestive" dance for the simple reason that it leaves nothing to the imagination, and because of this unashamed animality, revolts the average white tourist to the point of being unable to admire the phenomenal mastery which these women have of parts of the body over which we have no voluntary control at all.

From Bou Saada we drove to Setif, which has a large French garrison. There were coffee houses, public ones, with many dancers. These girls were Arabs, and Kabyle girls—not Ouled Naïls. Their costuming was simpler, in better taste as to line and color, but not nearly so interesting and splendid from the standpoint of jewelry. Here was slightly more variety of move-

An Arab dancing girl with her lover

ment, including some fast whirling, and a moving about the floor covering distance with a form of *chassé*.

Biskra was my next point of study. Biskra is best known to the world through Robert Hichen's "The Garden of Allah" and is a beautiful little town called "La Reine des Zibans" or Queen of the Desert. Here is the luxurious and tropic garden of Count Landon, made famous in "The Garden of Allah," and in this garden my guide played for me on the bamboo flute the love songs which Larbi played.

In Biskra in a cafe one night I saw a dancer, costumed as an Arab woman, who was one of the most remarkable individual dancers I saw in all Africa. When the whole evening was over I discovered that it was a man, a female impersonator, with that type of ugly charm which made me call him an "Arab Bert Savoy." He danced the "Danse du Sabre" with swords

and handkerchiefs; a dance with a carafe of wine on his head full to the brim and from which he spilled not a drop; a Handkerchief Dance, and even the Danse du Ventre—not nude, however. There were real girls, very pretty and young, in this cafe who danced also, but not one could approach the technical ability or the real dance spirit of the man.

It was also in Biskra that I had the thrill of seeing my first dervish dance—the dance of fanatic religious zeal—called the "Dance of Aissoua." It is supposed to be prohibited by the French Government, and so was held in a lonely hut on the edge of town.

There were five persons in the cast. A priest—with a most interesting face—a tom-tom player and a flute player, an attendant to the dervish and the dervish himself. The dervish was a mangy looking individual with one blind eye. When the music started he began to shake violently all over. He knelt down before his attendant who gave him something out of a little box, which he sniffed up each nostril. Later, Harzala, my guide, swore that this was nothing but powdered tobacco blessed by the marabout, but it was undoubtedly some sort of a drug. After this his frenzy increased. He danced back and forth, calling to the tom-tom and flute. Then he commanded, and the attendant gave him two pins like huge hat pins. These he proceeded to push entirely through both cheeks. After he had danced with these awhile, he removed them and there was no blood. Then he had his hands bound tightly behind his back, placed his burnouse all over him, danced again, and emerged with hands untied. He never stopped the shaking motion for one second, and kept calling and breathing excitedly the while. Then he took the pins again and ran them through the flesh of his throat, and later took them out with no blood. During this time, in a far corner, a brazier was being fanned by the attendant, who now withdrew from it a metal instrument shaped like a thin sickle, white hot. This the dervish

The picturesque way in which the desert dancers travel

Soudanese negroes performing the "Danse Negre"

licked with his tongue until it was black and cold. No burn appeared on his tongue although hissing steam arose each time.

Then, stripped to the waist, naked except for his baggy trousers, he took bundles of stiff straws in each hand, and lighting them, beat his bare flesh all over with the flames, folded his arms with the flames pouring up and over his forearms and hands and jabbed the flame directly into his face. The frenzy now reached its height and there appeared the embryo of dance form in the movements. The straw burned two full minutes. When it was quite burned out, he dropped to his knees and bit viciously at the big muscle in his arm. When he lifted his face blood was spurting from a jagged hole in the arm. He put his mouth over the wound again, and when he lifted it there was no wound or blood on the arm.

This is what I actually saw, and I was not hypnotized, nor was I tricked. I could have reached out and touched him as he knelt at my feet. And for this we paid him twenty-five francs —$1.65!

My guide also arranged a "Danse Negre" for me. It was performed by Soudanese Negro men who wore high conical shaped hats covered with pieces of mirrors, and skirts of skins of animals. The accompaniment was entirely by the dancers, who wore large drums slung over one shoulder which they beat with queer crooked beaters, and chanted. The dance was very fast, very acrobatic, and had some technical stunts after the general manner of Russian peasant dancing. The Negroes, however, did much pantomime and made terrifying grimaces directly in my face.

In spite of the fact that Biskra has a "Rue des Ouled Naïls" there was not a real Ouled in town when I arrived the latter end of May. The tourist season was over, and they had migrated farther south into the desert. I found that Touggourt, some hundreds of miles due south over the white dunes of the Sahara, was their summer headquarters—but it was eight days

"La Danse des Ouled Naïls"

by camel caravan to make the trip. Discovering, however, that the regular mail and passenger aeroplane which came from Algiers once a week, lay over in Biskra for two days, by dickering and haggling, I finally engaged it for a special command flight to Touggourt.

When we landed, a native officer of the Spahis took me to the Quartier des Ouled Naïls—the region of the city inhabited by this tribe exclusively. There I had them dance for me. Then we went to the rooftops and they danced again up there in the broiling sun so that I could make pictures of them in motion with my Graflex camera.

We flew back to Biskra that night. The memory of floating through the air over that white city, with its twinkling lights, nestled into the palms of a large oasis, will remain with me always.

My objective after Biskra was Constantine, that old city which has been the military stronghold of North Africa for

countless centuries. I had a private performance arranged at which a very fine woman dancer entertained me.

We went through many devious but interesting streets and vaulted passages to her house. There were musicians who played beautifully. One played a violin, but sat cross-legged and played it in the manner of a 'cello. The other played a small vase-shaped, clay drum, which had a deep boom in the middle and a light one on the edge.

The danseuse was decidedly large. But she had a fine face, and was almost a real beauty. She used no make-up, although she was elaborately tattooed, and her hands stained with henna. Her costume, rich but in more restrained taste than any I had yet seen, consisted of a dress of deep wine-red velvet to the ankles, with lace sleeves and ceinture. The waist was almost solidly embroidered in gold. All her jewelry was solid gold—three plain wide bracelets on each arm, a gold buckle on the girdle, pins on waist and shoulder, and anklets and rings. Her headdress was the simple arrangement of two handkerchiefs, but she had marvellous huge gold hoops for earrings.

Her Danse de l'Ouled Naïl was the nicest version of this dance I have seen, at all. Her hand work was charming. Her muscle dancing was adept and rhythmic and impressed one as interesting technique of body control. She also did dances with the handkerchiefs. Through all her dancing, this woman showed the artist consciousness; she had no touch of the manner of a woman displaying her body for sale.

Then the guide took us to a cafe where I saw a unique thing. In this cafe little boys dance. It appears that there is no public dancing of women in Constantine.

The cafe was, as usual, plain. We seated ourselves and were served coffee. Two Khabyle boys were dancing. The elder was twelve, a handsome little chap, something like one of the wavy-haired Greek bootblacks we sometimes see in America. He had on a red fez, a deep rose-colored taffeta vest, with

white shirt beneath. Low around his waist, almost on his hips, was a striped sash, which also hung almost to the ground in front, and below this a white skirt which was in fine creases and flared out like a circular skirt when he turned. He was however, a boy, dancing as a boy. And he was fiendishly clever. His body vibrated like an electric buzzer. There was nothing in common between his movements and the muscle dancing of the women—and his was a technique brought to an extreme degree of virtuosity. He had variety of movement, a peculiar head motion from side to side I had never seen before, and he covered much ground rapidly, alternating with standing still and vibrating.

In other cafes were boys dressed and made up as women, dancing all the dances which I had seen women perform in other cities. In one cafe I saw a dance of mountain men—a group dance of four or more men in huge white turbans and flowing white burnouses playing tom-toms and chanting as they danced in regular and geometric formations.

At Constantine, I said good-by to my car and driver, and proceeded to Tunis by train. On this train I was joined, to our mutual surprise and delight, by my old friends, Mr. and Mrs. Burton Holmes, and the rest of my days in Africa were spent with these charming people and expert travellers.

We motored from Tunis to Kairouan, one of the three holy cities of Islam. There in one of the mosques, we witnessed another Aissoua dance, a much more elaborate one, which my dragoman, Ben Saadi, was able to arrange for 200 francs.

We entered the mosque and went into a large central court-like room. Here about a dozen men sat on a huge carpet in the centre of the floor, chanting together. This kept on for a while after we were seated, and then others came and formed a line behind them, and they began to dance and sing, while those seated sang and played instruments, tom-toms, flutes, lutes, and a little pair of drums like miniature kettle drums. The mara-

bout then came and sat beside us—a quiet, fine looking man, of very serious, deep-calm, dignified bearing. An attendant brought four or five long swords, with a heavy solid metal ball, slightly larger than a baseball at the handle end, and with needle sharp points. These we felt and handled.

The dancing and chanting grew wilder. Suddenly from out of the shadows sprang a strange half-animal creature, who could hardly be called a man. His movements were like those of some dumb creature—roaming rhythmically but restlessly to and fro, finally coming to kneel at the feet of the marabout. The marabout kissed his head, and an attendant handed him one of the long sharp swords, which he ran through the creature's cheeks. Another was driven straight into his throat in the hollow below the Adam's apple. With these he whirled, and then he knelt while the attendant hammered on the one that was in the throat driving it in about two inches farther. Then he danced with these in him. When the marabout removed them the man-creature fell on the marabout's breast and quivered there for a while, then joining the circle of musicians he took up a tom-tom and the chant grew wilder. Then a second one came, a fine-looking young chap this time, and driving two swords through both cheeks and another one in the hollow of his throat, went through the same routine of dance movements, and submitted to the sword being hammered farther into his neck.

He also joined the circle after the swords had been removed.

The first one now returned and chewed up and swallowed broken glass before our eyes, while a third one took a huge spiny cactus and devoured it.

The whole scene was very impressive. When the show was done, we bade the marabout goodnight, returned to the hotel and went to bed. I was restless, and wakeful from the Arab coffee drunk so recently, so I read for about an hour. In response to a timid knock at the door I admitted Ben Saadi, quite

A beauty of Touggourt

Two dancers of the Ouled Naïl tribe

On an Arab roof-top

Mr. Shawn with Captain Perrier after flying over the Sahara Desert

breathless and very much excited. While wandering about town he had discovered a travelling troupe of musicians, singers and a dancer, who had just arrived that afternoon without preliminary advertising, and were about to begin their first performance. Would I come? Would I? I was in my clothes in five minutes and we nearly ran across the moonlit, ancient, white-domed city.

On the far side of the city, we came into a fondouk which my guide freely translated to me as being "Camel's Hotel." This had been cleaned, white washed and a platform built at one end under a giant flowering acacia tree whose fragrance filled the night air. The rest of the space was already filled with young Arabs in white turbans and white burnouses each one in the custom of that city, having a cluster of jasmine blossoms over his left ear. All were silently intent upon the performance already begun. There were four or five musicians producing a softer and more truly beautiful type of music than anything I had heard in North Africa. There was one man who sang in the typical Oriental manner of improvised cadenzas very beautifully, having a truly melodious voice.

There was one dancer, a woman. She was dressed in the costume of Tunis which consists of huge baggy trousers and a tight-fitting jacket. Her color scheme was a pale, but pure, blue, black and silver. She had a beautiful head of hair which she allowed to hang in a loose and fluffy cloud down her back. She danced with those most ancient of all dancers' instruments, the crotali. It was only in the use of the crotali that her dancing differed in any essential way from the other dancers I had seen in North Africa, as she maintained a constant rhythmic beat with these little metal finger cymbals at all times no matter what the movements of her arms or legs or body were.

Of course, in five weeks it was impossible for me to see all the dances that I knew about. There are seasonal dances which

take place only at certain times of the year and on special occasions.

I heard of one which takes place in the spring—the Feast of Ramadan. The most beautiful youth of a village goes out into the desert at the full of the moon, and with the entire village surrounding him in a great circle, he dances with a great slender branch of white almond blossoms, a dance to the Moon.

On the whole, the dancing of North Africa contains a rich variety and interest worthy of greater research than has yet been given it. For American theatrical use or art development it must be toned up from its monotony in each single dance. This can be done without losing the original flavor or essence and will present a type of dance that is full of sensuous mystery, rhythmic complication and romantic charm.

Chapter XVI

DANCING IN SPAIN

I have two reasons for including a chapter on the Dancing of Spain in this book which otherwise deals with Oriental or Asiatic peoples.

The first is that the Moorish conquest in Spain left its mark upon all Spanish art and life, and this is even more true of dancing than of architecture where the most obvious Moorish traces are to be seen. The foot stamping, the sinuous and almost sensual movements of the body and the weird minor strains of the music are more akin to the Orient than they are to the Occident.

My other reason is that here in Spain is the most famous survival of Christian religious dancing as an unanswerable argument that the Christian church in its primitive and vital state believed in a God who knew how to dance. I have spoken in greater detail about this in the chapter on "Dancing in Church" in my book, "The American Ballet."

My natural attraction to Spanish dancing and Spanish music had made me seek it out on all possible occasions in America. And I have read about it in every book and magazine that I could lay my hands on. Consequently my "castles in Spain" were palaces of rhythm.

Within my first twenty-four hours in Spain I realized my dream, and convinced myself that my "castle" was a reality. Had I been forced to leave after that first twenty-four hours, I should have felt that the entire journey across the ocean and back had been worth while.

I entered Spain from the North, coming from Paris to Barcelona. Having read widely of Spain previous to this visit, I was forewarned that I should have to search for the fast disappearing national types of dancing. This was true. At the Hotel Ritz in Barcelona, except for the language, one would have thought it was still Paris. In the dancing rooms of the hotel the latest fox trots blared forth, and the wealthy Barcelonese, garbed in the smartest Parisian manner, graced, not quite as awkwardly as we do, the modern ballroom floor.

After dinner, I started for Barceloneta—the old city with its "sun-dodging" streets. It is a gay city, and a bad one, and this quarter is one of the most dangerous in the world. But I had no mishap, although the places and people were obviously hard and vicious. First I went to a Spanish vaudeville house called the Eden Concert where I saw the usual singers of popular, indecent songs, and some dancers. The theatre starts at ten in the evening, and continues until one. The talent goes on in order of ability, the poorest first, so that it was after midnight before I saw the headliner, Carolina La Riva, a dancer after the classic Spanish manner. Her castanet playing was of the finest. It was impossible to analyze how she made the effect, for her castanets seemed to whisper, to snarl, to caress; they were always faultlessly rhythmic, and possessed of an endless variety of rhythms, surprises, pauses, explosions. La Riva was a splendid dancer, of the coldly patrician type, having a marked resemblance to Mme. Galli-Curci, who is more Spanish in type than Italian. It was with La Riva's teacher, Perfecto Perez, with whom I later studied in Barcelona.

In the cabarets of Barcelona I saw my first "Cuadro Flamenco." The word Flamenco—Flemish—attached to Spanish gypsy dancers has puzzled many, but the most satisfying explanation seems to be that of Havelock Ellis in his "Soul of Spain."

Clay dolls which catch delightfully the spirit

It is not quite obvious why the gypsy should be called a Flamenco, or Spanish soldier returned from the war in Flanders. Sallillas (Hampa, p. 54) believes that in the later and less glorious period of the war in the Low Countries, the soldiers came to be looked upon as a rowdy, boastful, dissipated type, and the "Flamenco," as he was called, degenerated into a worthless braggart, only to be coupled and at last confounded with the "picaro" and the gypsy.

Quoting again from the same chapter:

If we consider dancing as it takes place throughout the world generally, it may be said that there are three different kinds, according as the performance is mainly entrusted to three different regions of the body. There is the dancing in which the legs are the chief performers; this prevails in Europe generally, as well as in many other parts of the world, and may be said to be the only kind of dancing recognized in England and France; its most pronounced form is seen in the orthodox ballet. Then there is the dancing which is performed

of the Flamenco dancers of Spain

solely by the arms and hands; this kind of dancing is carried to a high degree of perfection by the Javanese, and also prevails in Japan. Finally, there is the dancing in which the muscles of the body itself play the chief part; this is found mainly in Africa and western Asia. Spanish dancing cannot be said to belong to any one of these three groups, because it really includes them all. When one watches an accomplished Spanish dancer, it is seen that every part of the body at the same moment takes its share in the performance—the head, the hands, the arms, even the muscles of the body. The legs in some dances play an energetic part, but more often a subdued part. The feet occupy perhaps the smallest conscious place, and in this the Italian ballet-dancer may be said to be the complement to the Spanish dancer, for there we sometimes seem to see nothing but marvellously accomplished feet supporting a wooden marionette. In an art which thus has so wide a range of expression, bringing within its sphere the whole body, it might be thought that strict dancing could too easily degenerate into license. Occasionally this is so, but not often, although when the dancer is a gypsy the dance may take on a character of almost ferocious

intensity. Spanish dancing is saved by the special temperament of the Spaniard, especially when combined, as that temperament is in the Sevillian, with aesthetic sensitiveness. The instinctive dignity and self-respect, the profound love of decorum and beautiful ritual, which the Spaniard displays in his religious functions, and even in the bull-fight, become visible in dancing also.

Another characteristic of Spanish dancing, and especially of the most typical kind, called flamenco, lies in its accompaniments and particularly in the fact that under proper conditions all these spectators are themselves performers. In flamenco dancing, among an audience of the people, everyone takes a part, by rhythmic clapping and stamping, and by the occasional prolonged "oles" and other cries by which the dancer is encouraged or applauded. Thus the dance is not a spectacle for the amusement of a languid and passive public, as with us. It is rather a visible embodiment of an emotion in which every spectator himself takes an active and helpful part; it is, as it were, a vision evoked by the spectators themselves and upborne on the continuous waves of rhythmical sound which they generate. Thus it is that at the end of a dance an absolute silence often falls, with no sound of applause; the relation of performer and public has ceased to exist. So personal is this dancing that it may be said that an intimate association with the spectators is required for its full manifestation. The finest Spanish dancing is at once killed or degraded by the presence of an indifferent or unsympathetic public, and that is probably why it cannot be transplanted, but remains local.

Dancing is a vital thing in the daily life of the people of Spain and it is of a very high order, complicated, technical, difficult. Dancing forms the chief part of all entertainment, and it is almost the only modern European country where dancing is still a part of the Church services, and has been so in unbroken succession since the days of the primitive Christian Church, in which there was a danced church service. It was not my privilege to see in person the dances which take place at

La Argentina
18th Century Bolero

Classic Spanish dance

Peasant dance

Flamenco dance

various times before the high altar in the great cathedral at Seville. I have read descrpitions in many books, such as "The Dance" by the Kinneys, a charming pen picture by Somerset Maugham in his "Andalusia," and in the above mentioned "Soul of Spain" by Havelock Ellis. The most complete description and the most satisfying to me is in Carl Van Vechten's "Music of Spain."

On certain days the "Sevillana" is danced before the high altar of the cathedral at Seville. The Reverened Henry Cart de Lafontaine ("Proceedings of the Musical Association," London, thirty-third session, 1906-7), gives the following account of it, quoting a "French author"; "While Louis XIII was reigning over France, the Pope heard much talk of the Spanish dance called the 'Sevillana.' He wished to satisfy himself, by actual eye-witness, as to the character of this dance, and expressed his wish to a bishop of the diocese of Seville, who every year visited Rome. Evil tongues make the bishop responsible for the primary suggestion of the idea. Be that as it may, the Bishop, on his return to Seville, had twelve youths well instructed in all the intricate measures of this Andalusian dance. He had to choose youths, for how could he present maidens to the horrified glance of the Holy Father! When his little troop was thoroughly schooled and perfected, 'Sevillana' was danced at the Vatican. The Pope warmly complimented the young executants, who were dressed in beautiful silk costumes of the period. The Bishop humbly asked for permission to perform this dance at certain fetes in the cathedral church at Seville, and further pleaded for a restriction of this privilege to that church alone. The Pope, hoist by his own petard, did not like to refuse, and granted the privilege with this restriction, that it should last only so long as the costumes of the dancers were wearable. Needless to say, these costumes are, therefore, objects of constant repair, but they are supposed to retain their original identity even to this day. And this is the reason why the twelve boys who dance the 'Sevillana' before the high altar in the cathedral on certain feast days are dressed in the costume belonging to the reign of Louis XIII."

Courtesy of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.
Photograph by T. E. Marr & Son.

The genius of Sargent brings us the real atmosphere of the "Cuadro Flamenco" in his "El Jaleo"

This is a very pretty story but it is not uncontradicted. . . . Has any statement been made about Spanish dancing or music which has been allowed to go uncontradicted? Look upon that picture and upon this; "As far as it is possible to ascertain from records," says Rhoda G. Edwards in the "Musical Standard," "this dance would seem always to have been in use in Sevilla cathedral; when the town was taken from the Moors in the thirteenth century it was undoubtedly an established custom and in 1428 we find the six boys recognized as an integral part of the chapter by Pope Eugenius IV. The dance is known as the (sic) "Los Seises" or dance of the six boys, who, with four others, dance it before the high altar at Benediction on the three evenings before Lent and in the octaves of Corpus Christi and La Purissima (the Conception of Our Lady). The dress of the boys is most picturesque, page costumes of the time of Philip III being worn, blue for La Purissima and red satin doublets slashed with blue for the other occasion; white hats with blue and white feathers are also worn whilst dancing.

The dance is usually of twenty-five minutes duration and in form seems quite unique, not resembling any of the other Spanish dance forms, or in fact those of any other country. The boys accompany the symphony on castanets and sing a hymn in two parts whilst dancing.

From another author we learn that religious dancing is to be seen elsewhere in Spain than at Seville cathedral. At one time, it is said to have been common. The pilgrims to the shrine of the Virgin at Montserrat were wont to dance, and dancing took place in the churches of Valencia, Toledo and Jerez. Religious dancing continued to be common, especially in Catalonia up to the seventeenth century.

After visiting Barcelona and having exhausted the possibilities just then as to dancing and dance instruction, I moved on to Madrid, where the life was so cosmopolitan that the native dance had been almost eliminated. In the leading vaudeville theatres, the "Maravilas," I saw several dancers but of artistically low calibre.

It was really in Seville, the heart of Andalusia, which is the dancing province of the dancing country of the world, that I found typical Spanish dancing. Twice a day I attended the Academia de Baile of the great Otero, to study the fundamentals of classic Spanish dancing. Everywhere in Seville you see that dance which outsiders call "Sevillanos" and the people of Seville call "seguidillas". I had the privilege of seeing Manuel Otero perform coplas or stanzas of this classic dance with his leading pupil, Pilar Molina, whose charm and great talent I had daily been admiring, as her lesson preceded mine, and I purposely came early.

Let me quote from "The Dance" by Troy and Margaret Kinney what they say about the "Sevillanas":

Very broadly speaking, the prevailing foot-work of the "Seguidilas" family in the *pas de vasque*—or in Spanish, *paso de vasco*. Turns, advances and retreats, are almost incessant.

Variety of step is secured by frequent *fouettes* and *fouette tours,* the leg sweep in the latter being usually "inward," the foot with most performers (at present), raised more than waist-high. Swinging steps it will be noticed, choppy elements such as *battements, entrechats* and the like are, by distinction, the elements of the sharper work of the North. "Sevillanas" makes the feet less important than the hands and arms. These, however bewildering they are made to appear, follow a simple theme of opposition, as for instance: (1) left arm horizontally extended to the side, right arm across chest—(2) right arm extended upward, left forearm across the back. As the simplest movement of clubswinging is incomprehensible to the person to whom it never has been explained, so with the arms in "Sevillanas," with the bewilderment multiplied by the play of line effected by the arms of a couple.

So gracious, so stately, so rich in light and shade is "Sevillanas" that it alone gives play to all the qualities needed to make a truly great artist. Taking it at a comparatively slow tempo, the perfection of every detail has its highest value. A new generation of performers has been rather upset by a passing mode of rapid foot-work, and under its influence too many of them tend to rush the dance and so detract from its majesty. True it is that a great work of art can stand a good deal of abuse; but any menace to such a work as the one discussed, points out the need of a national academy, where the treasures of the dancing art could be preserved from possible whims of even an artistically intelligent public, and the compliance of a non-resisting majority of artists. Unlike most great European nations, Spain has no national academy of the dance.

Spanish dancing has such endless variety of forms. The names of the different dances are bewildering, and the different explanations of different dancers and teachers in Spain about the same dance, even more so. To one who is irresistibly attracted to the dancing and music of Spain its intoxication is undeniable. It has moved Popes, Cardinals, Statesmen, and

English Missionaries from their wonted calm. So when a dancer from America, sensitive to the fascination of this inflaming rhythm, comes into the reality of Spanish dancing, it is not to be wondered that he experiences a divine drunkenness.

Wherever I have found a people whose dancing has come up, naturally and spontaneously out of their own soil and out of their own racial sources, and who are able to lose themselves in the dance, I feel always as if I were on the verge of being initiated into a cosmic mystery. It is in this sense of immanence which sends me on and on hunting native dancers in far corners of the earth, and which will some day send me back to go into the heart of savage Africa and into those remote parts of Asia which I have not yet seen.

Having started "West from California's shores" and followed the dance through the Orient into the Levant and from the Levant into this part of Europe which is the link between East and West, my circle was completed, and yet no sense of inner completion was achieved. Back in America where my voyage commenced, I found again the expression of my innermost thought in the words of the cosmic Whitman:

Facing west from California's shores,
Inquiring, tireless, seeking what is yet unfound,
I, a child, very old, over waves, towards the house of maternity, the land of migrations, look afar,
Look off the shores of my western sea, the circle almost circled;
For starting westward from Hindustan, from the vales of Kashmere,
From Asia, from the North, from the God, the sage and the hero,
From the south, from the flowery peninsulas and spice islands,
Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,

Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,
(But where is what I started for so long ago?
And why is it yet unfound?)

THE END

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following is a list of books which will be of great help to students of the dance. In addition to the books listed the earnest student will find much interesting material in old files of the National Geographic and Asia Magazines, both the articles and illustrations being of great value.

KABUKI, the popular stage of Japan, by *Zoe Kincaid* (Macmillan & Co., 1925); NOH OR ACCOMPLISHMENT, by *Ernest Fenollosa* and *Ezra Pound* (Macmillan & Co., 1916); DANSEUSES CAMBODGIENNES, by *George Groslier* in French (A. Challamel, 1913); SOUTH-INDIAN IMAGES OF GODS AND GODDESSES, by *H. Krishna Sastri* (Madras Government Press, 1916); THE HIMALAYAS IN INDIAN ART, by *E. B. Havell* (John Murray, 1924); THE DANCE OF SIVA, by *Ananda Coomaraswamy* (Sunwise Turn, 1924); THE DANCE, by *Troy* and *Margaret West Kinney* (Stokes, 1914-24); THE ART OF BALLET, by *Mark Perugini* (Lippincott, 1915); MANUAL OF DANCING STEPS, by *Elsa Pohl* (1914); ART OF TERPSICHORE, by *Luigi Albertieri* (G. Ricordi, 1923); GRAMMAR OF THE ART OF DANCING, by *F. A. Zorn*; MANUAL OF CLASSICAL THEATRICAL DANCING, by *C. E. Cecchetti* (Beaumont Press, 1922); HISTORY OF DANCING, by *G. Vuillier* (1898); DANCING ANCIENT & MODERN, by *Ethel Urlin* (Appleton, 1914); ANTIQUE GREEK DANCE, by *Maurice Emmanuel*; MODERN DANCING & DANCERS, by *J. E. C. Flitch* (Lippincott, 1912); DANCING AND DANCERS OF TODAY, by *C. & C. Caffin* (Dodd, Mead, 1912); BOOK OF THE DANCE, by *Arnold Genthe* (Mitchell Kennerly, 1916); (John Lane, 1918); DRAMAS AND DANCE DRAMAS, by *Wm. Ridgeway;* THE DANCE, by *Cecil Sharp* and *A. P. Oppe* (Halton & Truston Smith, 1924); THE DANCE AND ITS PLACE IN EDUCATION, by *H'Doubler* (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1925); THE HARLEQUINADE Vols. I &

II, by *Maurice Sand* (Martin Secker, 1915); Art of Nijinsky, by *G. Whitworth* (Chatto & Windus, 1913); The Dance of Life, by *Havelock Ellis* (Houghton-Mifflin); Pagan & Christian Creeds, by *Edward Carpenter* (Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1920); (Chapter on Ritual Dancing). Dancing and the Drama, East and West, *Stella Bloch* (Orientalia, Inc., New York); Le Ballet Contemporain, *Svetlow* (de Brainoff, Paris, 1912); Margaret Morris Dancing, *Morris & Daniels* (Kegan, Paul, French, Trubner & Co., Ltd., London); The Sacred Dance, *J. O. Oesterley*. Drama of Savage Peoples, *Havemeyer*, (Yale University Press).

W9-BTJ-415